Commentary

Volume Seventy-nine, Number Six, June 1985

The Perversion of Foreign Aid

Nick Eberstadt

Orthodox Jews—From Passivity to Activism
Jacob Katz

Vietnam & the 60's Generation: A Memoir
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The Secret of Mary Gordon's Success
Carol Iannone

Solzhenitsyn—An Exchange
Norman Podhoretz and Critics

BOOKS IN REVIEW: Angelo Codevilla / Arch Puddington / Kenneth S. Lynn / Henrik Bering-Jensen / Daniel Pipes

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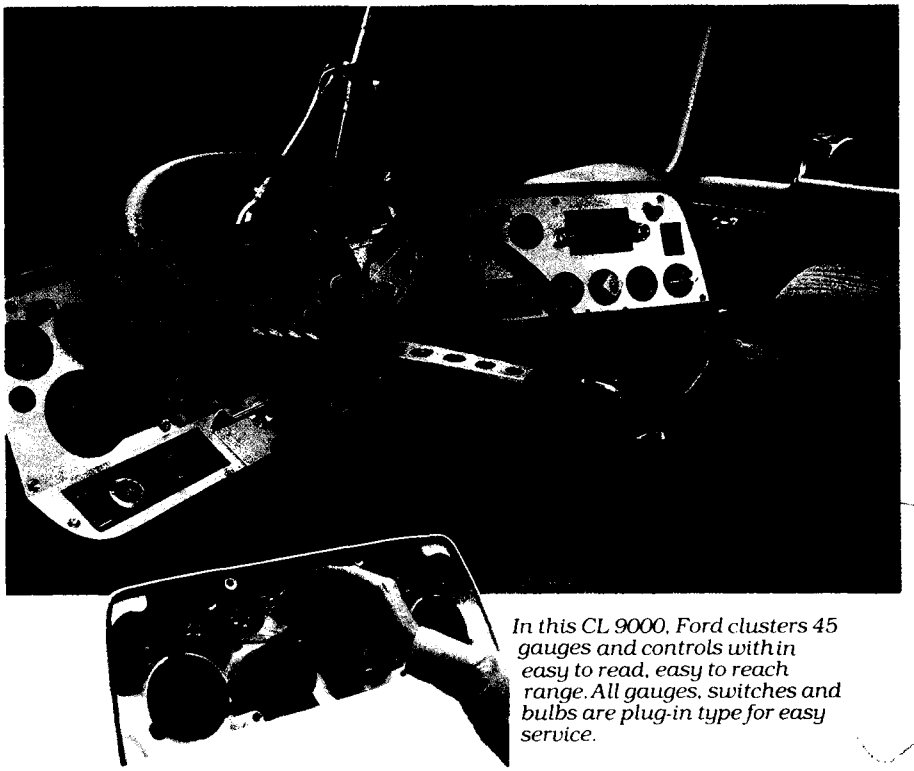

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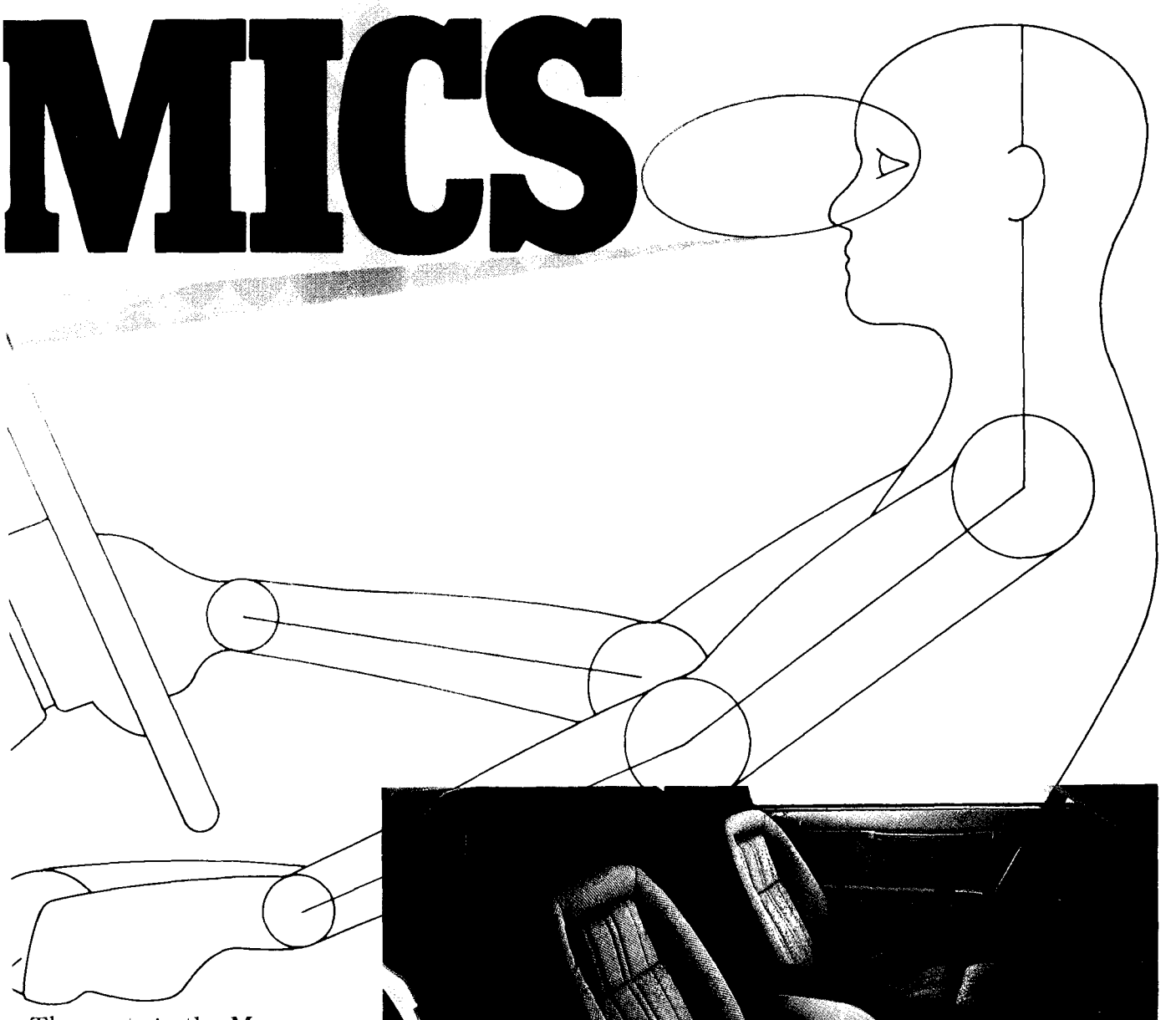

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Commentary

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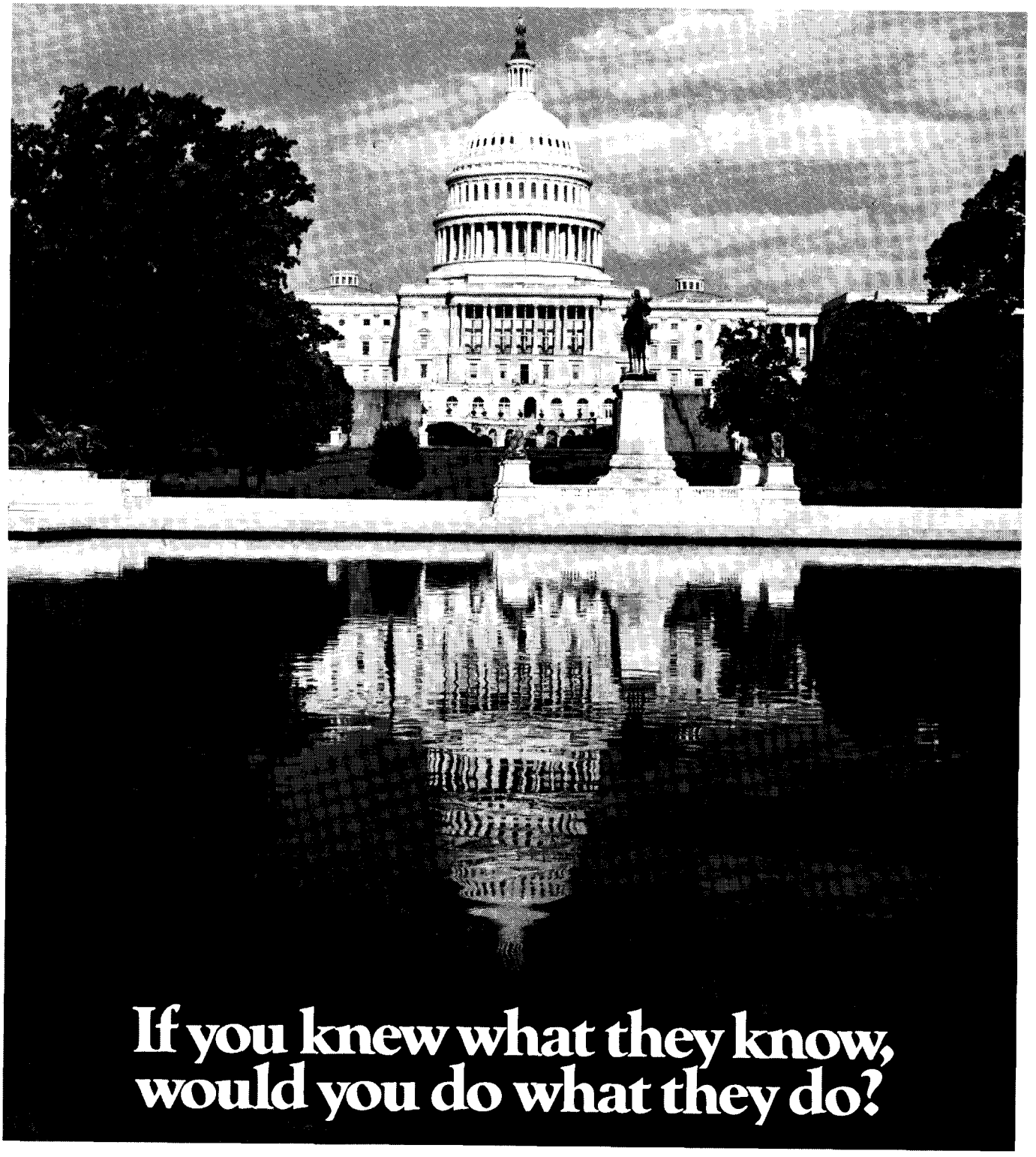

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Letters from Readers

The Solzhenitsyn Question

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am delighted I stimulated Norman Podhoretz to write such an excellent article ["The Terrible Question of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn," February], but I don't differ from him on the nature of Solzhenitsyn's talent quite as much as he seems to think. He writes that I "seem to regard [Solzhenitsyn] as a major artist in the line of the great 19th-century novelists, in some respects resembling Tolstoy and in others Dostoevsky." This is not quite so. I point out that this is the way he regards himself. I also point out that the secret of his literary freshness and novelty for Soviet readers was that he invoked and imitated the classics in order to overturn Soviet aesthetics and show them up for the shoddy goods they were. But I don't think I state anywhere that Solzhenitsyn was necessarily as good as his models.

To tell the truth, I had originally intended to devote more of my book to the literary aspect of Solzhenitsyn's works, but that was before I realized how much I had to say on other matters, and saw what a monster I had spawned. If I had done so, perhaps I could have made my attitude clearer (though my criticism of *August 1914* is pretty forthright, I think). In fact, I rather agree with Mr. Podhoretz's assessment that *Gulag* and *The Oak and the Calf* will stand as his very best works. However, I think Mr. Podhoretz still underrates *Ivan Denisovich*, *Matryona's Place*, and the best pages of *The First Circle*. In this respect, I tend to the opinion of the late Arkady Belinkov, whom I quote in my book, who compared Solzhenitsyn to the painters of the Renaissance. Their inspiration was the classical past, but what they produced was something new and fresh, and with it they swept away the decayed forms of the Middle Ages. Solzhenitsyn's literary achievement was less grandiose (he was only one man, after all) and took place within an infinitely shorter time span, but on a miniature scale the analogy holds. He swept away the dead weight of Socialist Realism and reminded Russian writers of a past that they had not exactly forgotten, but had come to regard as a museum culture. More importantly, he showed them ways of drawing creatively on that past and using it in their work in the present. It was no mean achievement, and any appreciation of Solzhenitsyn's role in 20th-century Russian history must take account of this important literary dimension.

MICHAEL SCAMMELL
Woking, Surrey, England

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I think Norman Podhoretz's piece on Solzhenitsyn is one of the finest things I've ever seen. Congratulations.

WILLIAM F. RICKENBACKER
Lake Charles, Louisiana

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Norman Podhoretz's article is simply the best short piece—or long piece for that matter—on Solzhenitsyn that I've ever read. His comparison of Tolstoy to Solzhenitsyn is, to my mind, right on the mark. Solzhenitsyn's best books are easily those in which he sees himself as a prophet, and *The Oak and the Calf*—aside from *One Day in the Life*—is the most readable. He's right too about the major works of fiction; they are inert. . . . I also agree exactly with Mr. Podhoretz's discussion of Solzhenitsyn's anti-Semitism. And, of course, with his final paragraphs about Solzhenitsyn's challenge to us.

STEPHEN MILLER
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As one of those who have read all the translated works of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn—and the Michael Scammell biography as well—I want to thank Norman Podhoretz for helping me to clarify my feelings about this great man.

I agree completely with what Mr. Podhoretz says about Solzhenitsyn's meaning for the West, and with his subtle but pointed criterion: i.e., the combination of megalomania and selfishness as a psychological precondition for artistic greatness.

But I'm not sure I agree with what he says about *The First Circle* and *Cancer Ward*. Though these books are labeled "novels," the characters therein (and especially that of Stalin) "lived" for me and seemed to be in the same genre as

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Ivan Denisovich Shukhov and those in the *Gulag* (Solzhenitsyn himself described *Gulag* as an exercise in history written in "novel" form).

I am no authority on literature, but I'm not sure that Solzhenitsyn should be categorized or pigeonholed as a novelist . . . though he wishes, as Mr. Podhoretz points out, so to categorize himself. His importance, even genius, is beyond such narrow categorization; perhaps "writer" is the only adequate term. . . .

FREDERIC WILE

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was impressed by Norman Podhoretz's wonderfully perceptive and judicious article on Solzhenitsyn, which does full justice to a man who is one of the great figures of our time. Few people, I am sure, can write with more authority on Solzhenitsyn than Mr. Podhoretz has.

I heartily agree with Mr. Podhoretz's judgment on *The Oak and the Calf*, but *Cancer Ward* meant more to me than it apparently did to him. Whether it is a well-constructed novel I am in no position to judge, but as a demonstration of the survival of decency, sympathy, and kindness—I hesitate to use the word "compassion"—under the most difficult conditions, it is a great human document.

HENRY REGNERY

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Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's article is at once informative, reassuring, and a great disappointment. Having read all of Solzhenitsyn's books that have been translated into English, I was naturally compelled by the subject. Since I am in complete agreement with Mr. Podhoretz's well-known views on the Soviet regime, . . . I sat down to read the article with great anticipation.

Mr. Podhoretz provides a wealth of fascinating biographical information which one is hard put to find elsewhere. In addition, his deep respect for Solzhenitsyn's "superhuman" courage comes through loud and clear. He also hit the mark perfectly in his defense of Solzhenitsyn against such epithets as "anti-democratic Slavophile." I also agree that Solzhenitsyn is an implicit rather than an overt anti-Semite, though I have not read his latest volume. . . .

On these points and on questions of political interpretation in general, I heartily agree; it is Norman Podhoretz the literary critic who loses me altogether.

Having also read all of the English translations of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy I, like Mr. Podhoretz, cannot help comparing Solzhenitsyn with these past giants but, unlike Mr. Podhoretz, I believe Solzhenitsyn's stature is equal to theirs. . . . When dealing with writers as complex and prolific as these, any generalizations must be supported by at least a few specifics. . . . Yet Mr. Podhoretz asks us to accept his sweeping statement that Solzhenitsyn is not even "a true novelist." Mr. Podhoretz thus brushes aside thousands of pages of fiction, calling it dead weight, saying it "fail[s] to live," without giving so much as a shred of specific criticism. If by "failing to live" Mr. Podhoretz means that Solzhenitsyn's characters are flat and inexpressive, without souls, dead, then he certainly should have supported his assertions with at least one example.

In the classic *Cancer Ward*, where Solzhenitsyn sensitively portrays the suffering of cancer patients, what reader can forget the dignified portrayal of Oleg Kostoglotov? He is a simple man, a man of great kindness and empathy. In the closing pages, Kostoglotov is finally released, only to be crammed into a freight train, headed for certain death. Yet there is an optimistic note as well, for Kostoglotov is glad finally to be free to "feel the sun." Kostoglotov is as fully portrayed and unforgettable a character as Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot* or Stepan Verkhovensky in *The Possessed*. . . .

I would also like to comment on Mr. Podhoretz's praise of *The Gulag Archipelago*. Here we go from dead weight to hero worship. How is it that *The Gulag Archipelago* is so vastly superior to Solzhenitsyn's other achievements when all of these books contain much of the same raw material? Instead of one long story, *The Gulag Archipelago* is composed of a myriad of tiny stories. And who can say that the material for *Cancer Ward* or *The First Circle*, etc., is not drawn as much from reality as *The Gulag Archipelago*? Solzhenitsyn himself states toward the end of the second volume of *The Gulag Archipelago* that the subject by its nature has become mercilessly redundant. In fact, by the third volume one is no longer shocked and outraged but simply numbed by such vast horror. . . .

Solzhenitsyn's greatness lies in his ability to breathe life and humanitarian ethos into history. In each of his novels, he has compiled a mass of information and sculpted it into vivid lifelike experience, all with great sensitivity.

A literary figure as prominent as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn deserves more specific critical attention than the drubbing he received from Mr. Podhoretz. . . .

KURT R. SAX

Ravinia, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It was a delight to read Norman Podhoretz's powerful essay on Solzhenitsyn, and on Michael Scammell's new biography, which he rightly describes as "wonderful." A small quibble: personally, I would rank Solzhenitsyn's novels distinctly higher as literary achievements. I even belong to what appears to be the minority within a minority that both read *and* admired *August 1914*. Perhaps the novels' mixed reception is due to some extent to the fact that, on top of all his obvious and transcendent themes, Solzhenitsyn seems to have retained an engineer's interest in fairly obscure technical issues. *Cancer Ward* was partly a rather somber meditation on the nature of medical ' ledge, and *August 1914* meant a lot more to readers who have spent time worrying about the problems of writing military history. On the other hand, his biographer reports that Solzhenitsyn is reworking much of *The Red Wheel* and appears to be having difficulty completing it. So perhaps his own view is secretly closer to that of Mr. Podhoretz!

PETER BRIMELOW

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In my recent experience there has been no more striking confirmation of the adage that there is no accounting for tastes, even among the most like-minded, than Norman Podhoretz's "The Terrible Question of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn." In several years of reading COMMENTARY I have found nothing to disagree with in Mr. Podhoretz's articles, at least nothing that would send me to my typewriter. But having read the works of Solzhenitsyn as steadily as those of Mr. Podhoretz, I was struck by the fact that

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I hold views on Solzhenitsyn's novels that are the direct opposite of his. I found *The First Circle* the most gripping work written in my lifetime; *August 1914* a novel I could not put down, for its sweep, tension, and lessons; and *Cancer Ward* a literary expression of human values that makes them come to life like nothing else I know. *The First Circle* and *Lenin in Zurich* provide portraits of Lenin and Stalin that bring them to life as venal little men in a way a dozen biographies have not captured, while *August 1914*'s treatment of Samsonov, the Russian commander at Tannenburg, makes real a Russian utterly hidden from the 20th century by its historians.

I am sure there is a good explanation of why Mr. Podhoretz and I have such different views about these works. But with due respect for his learning, I can only conclude that literary criticism, even of Mr. Podhoretz's coherent and informed kind . . . , is really just the expression of unadjudicable taste at best, with a status quite inconsequential in comparison to the literature it seeks to understand and appraise. . . . Probably there is no question of right or wrong, truth or falsity when it comes to literary criticism. How otherwise can I square my respect for Mr. Podhoretz with my profound moral and aesthetic debt to Solzhenitsyn?

My debt is a moral as well as an artistic one, for it was through those works of Solzhenitsyn which Mr. Podhoretz "rightly" prizes, the three volumes of *The Gulag Archipelago*, that I and others were brought to the view of the Soviet Union, and of the monstrousness of Marxism, that we share with Mr. Podhoretz. To put it briefly, it was reading Solzhenitsyn that led me to take COMMENTARY seriously. In the magazine's pages, off and on, writers have wrestled with the "terrible question" Solzhenitsyn presents to us. It is not a question about Solzhenitsyn, as Mr. Podhoretz's title suggests, but a question of whether our secular institutions, and the toleration of all viewpoints (even those inimical to humanity) spawned by our ideological and religious skepticism, is really a viable middle ground between the inevitable totalitarianism Marxism requires and the religious authoritarianism to which Solzhenitsyn has been driven.

ALEXANDER ROSENBERG
Syracuse, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It certainly surprised me that Norman Podhoretz considers Solzhenitsyn's rank as a novelist to be one of the "terrible questions." It never occurred to me to take him seriously in that category. . . . Perhaps that's why I never made the effort to get and read the first volume of his war book, on which Solzhenitsyn himself seems to place so much importance.

Yet I find even the question of whether *War and Peace* is the towering novel so many people think it is not to be the point here. After all, Tolstoy himself considered Shakespeare a terrible writer, and wrote at great length about his false preeminence among playwrights. . . . I myself, in a modest and obscure way, found nothing in *War and Peace* more wonderful than the combined effect of the great short works like *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*; it is merely longer. In any case, such comparisons are not in my opinion of much use.

I think Mr. Podhoretz . . . is too much inclined to respect biographies. What could Scammell . . . tell me that would either make me revere the great man more, or temper my admiration? As men we are all flawed, but I regard Solzhenitsyn as does Malcolm Muggeridge, who called him "the noblest human being alive." For those of us, and I think Mr. Podhoretz is one, who agree with Sidney Hook that "the question involved [of one's attitude toward Communism] is probably the central political-cultural-intellectual problem of the 20th century," Solzhenitsyn is the incarnation of the biblical witness. He is unique and invaluable in our time. So even if he himself is a bit vain, and mistakenly so, about his novelistic powers, to me it matters hardly at all. . . .

About *The Oak and the Calf*, I did not think when I read it that Solzhenitsyn was a "megalomaniac," but quite interested in his own importance. Aren't all great authors? I compare Solzhenitsyn's relationship to Tvardovsky with Mr. Podhoretz's tribute to another exiled writer, Milan Kundera ["An Open Letter to Milan Kundera," October 1984]. From that point of view, *The Oak and the Calf* may be even more remarkable than he says it is. Those American critics who have found Solzhenitsyn "ungrateful" and unable to recognize the contribution made by Tvardovsky to literary expression in that horrible country are only looking for some way to depreciate Solzhenitsyn.

From almost the very beginning I found, unlike Mr. Podhoretz's view of the matter, that the Left-liberals were hard at work to depreciate and devalue Solzhenitsyn's writings. So when he tells us that there are "staunch anti-Communists who oppose him because he espouses a species of Russian nationalism that is explicitly anti-democratic and implicitly anti-Semitic," I have little sympathy. To me it is a *fact* that Jews were among the most numerous and active perpetrators of Communism in Russia, and have always been among the majority of its supporters in this country. What is to be gained by denying it? There is even a Communist faction in Israel. . . .

Mr. Podhoretz has chosen a quotation from Solzhenitsyn concerning "the failure to understand the radical hostility of Communism to mankind as a whole" that . . . is to my mind precisely right. To set against it a possible tinge of anti-Semitism that may or may not be in Solzhenitsyn's writings is to my way of thinking to be fundamentally wrong about both Solzhenitsyn and Communism. And it makes me suspicious of those "staunch anti-Communists" he alludes to.

I seem to have lost track of the "terrible question." I guess I don't find any. That Solzhenitsyn is not a great novelist I will concede. But before the novelists Richardson and Fielding and Tolstoy there were many great writers. Swift and Dr. Johnson and many others have served the cause of freedom and enlightenment without being novelists. Perhaps Mr. Podhoretz's "terrible question" was intended ironically. Solzhenitsyn is hardly a lovable personality. But I cannot conceive in our times of a more admirable one. . . .

BERTRAM LIPPMAN
Coram, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's stimulating essay on Solzhenitsyn contains many shrewd observations but also a number of statements that are highly debatable. Among the latter is the extraordinary praise bestowed upon Michael Scammell's recent biography of the Russian writer. The book is said to be "wonderful," and it is even claimed that, as a biographer, Scammell has fulfilled the

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injunction of Matthew Arnold "to see the object as in itself it really is."

Such a conclusion is unfortunately wide of the mark. I say this as a cousin of Natalia Reshetovskaya (Solzhenitsyn's first wife) and Solzhenitsyn, and as one of the individuals extensively interviewed by Scammell for his book. For despite the prodigious labor that obviously went into the writing of this biography, it cannot serve as a reliable guide to the life and personality of Solzhenitsyn.

Most of the omissions and distortions that mar Scammell's text stem from his inordinate dependence on the views of Reshetovskaya, as expressed both in her published writings and in a series of letters which she volunteered to send to Scammell from Moscow. Scammell is well aware that Reshetovskaya had earlier collaborated with Soviet authorities in their campaign to discredit Solzhenitsyn, yet he persists in accepting her version of events in a manner that can at best be called recklessly uncritical. As even one example will demonstrate, this attitude bears on more than the narrow question of the personal relationship between Reshetovskaya and Solzhenitsyn.

Scammell has described in elaborate detail the various stages of the divorce proceedings during 1971-72, noting even the fine nuances of Reshetovskaya's moods. But then, incredibly, he has chosen to skip over the stormy events of 1972: two court hearings in Ryazan (in June and July); the appearance of a manipulated lawyer, Alexeyeva; the false testimony of Alexeyeva and Reshetovskaya in court; and finally the direct intervention of the KGB and the resultant scandalous publicity in August. These circumstances were widely known in Moscow at the time, and it is hard to believe that Scammell could have been unaware of them. No doubt Reshetovskaya would prefer silence about these less than savory episodes, but surely Scammell has an obligation to report how gross political machinations were injected into the divorce process with Reshetovskaya's concurrence. As it stands, the picture Scammell presents is radically incomplete and hence misleading. (Readers can get an inkling of the true situation from the recently published memoirs of Galina Vishnevskaya, who witnessed a dramatic confrontation among Reshetovskaya, Solzhenitsyn, and Alexeyeva in the summer of 1972. See *Galina*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984, pp. 414-19.)

The above example is by no means unique. Worse, it fits into a disturbing pattern of Scammell following Reshetovskaya's lead whenever she attempts to dismiss or make light of Solzhenitsyn's suspicions concerning the KGB. This inclination reaches a climax in Scammell's comments on a meeting between Reshetovskaya and Solzhenitsyn during the extremely tense period after the manuscript of *The Gulag Archipelago* had fallen into the hands of the authorities.

The regime's hysterical reaction to the subsequent publication of the work is surely proof enough that the authorities were more than a little worried about Solzhenitsyn. Yet Scammell blindly follows Reshetovskaya once again, dwelling approvingly and at length on her charge that in this context Solzhenitsyn's fear of surveillance must be ascribed to a vigorous literary imagination.

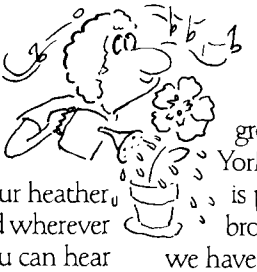
It is difficult to say why Scammell's critical acumen seems to desert him entirely when dealing with Reshetovskaya. Part of the reason seems to have been a misguided sense of loyalty to her. . . . The result is a biography that is very far indeed from the hope expressed by Matthew Arnold.

I should add that the text has other serious flaws, including an utter lack of sympathy for the writer's religious convictions, and a less than honest portrayal of Scammell's own relationship with Solzhenitsyn. There is also a scattering of factual errors, including incorrect identifications of eight photographs (e.g., the picture said to be Solzhenitsyn's mother is of another woman).

A book on Solzhenitsyn worthy of Norman Podhoretz's encomium has yet to appear.

VERONIKA STEIN
Jersey City, New Jersey

Water Music



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To the Editor of Commentary:

Since I have published my own review-essay of Michael Scammell's biography of Solzhenitsyn (*Catholicism in Crisis*, February 1985), I shall not comment on various details of Norman Podhoretz's article, though I certainly do not share his assessment that "it is a wonderful book" or that Scammell's "scholarship is scrupulous." Rather, I shall confine myself to Mr. Podhoretz's remark that Solzhenitsyn "espouses a species of Russian nationalism that is explicitly anti-democratic...."

Without the evidence for them, which I could offer in a full-length article, I present these five assertions about the complex subject of how Solzhenitsyn views democracy:

1. He never urges the states of the West to abandon democracy.

2. He speaks freely of the faults of modern Western democracies, but his criticisms are always of the faults and not of democracy *per se*.

3. He fears the social upheaval which he expects would be the likely result if democracy were suddenly to be introduced into the political life of the Russians, who in their thousand-year history have known democracy (and then only abortively) for six months.

4. He imagines that, as a substitute for the totalitarianism of the Soviet Union, authoritarianism might be preferable to democracy *at the present moment*.

5. Most important, he has not declared, ever, a theoretical preference for authoritarianism over democracy.

From my scrutiny of every reference which Solzhenitsyn has made to the subject of democracy, I am convinced that the received opinion that he is explicitly anti-democratic is quite wrong.

Edward E. Ericson, Jr.
Calvin College
Grand Rapids, Michigan

To the Editor of Commentary:

In "The Terrible Question of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn" Norman Podhoretz writes that the primary reason why critics in this country reject Solzhenitsyn is his harsh attacks on Western foreign policy since 1945. Solzhenitsyn seemingly leaves open no possibility for negotiation to compromise with Marxist regimes. [He] indicts the West's failure to perceive the true nature of the adversary—an adversary which he describes as "irredeemable." . . . American foreign policy, however, has consistently operated on the assumption that the adversary is not "irredeemable," but may be "reformed."

The controversy arising from Solzhenitsyn's indictment of postwar American foreign policy can perhaps be resolved by a reexamination of the foundations of American policy beginning with a careful rereading of the early postwar works of George F. Kennan, the author of "containment" and the principal intellectual architect of American postwar policy. In his famous 1947 article, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," Kennan assured us that there are absolute limits which are "binding even for the cruelest dictatorship," and that we could promote a "gradual mellowing" or perhaps even the breakup of the Soviet regime through a policy of containment and by presenting to the world the example of our own economic development, spiritual vitality, and moral and political leadership. All of this could be accomplished if "the Western world finds the strength and resourcefulness to contain Soviet power over a period of ten to fifteen years." . . .

In contrast to Solzhenitsyn's vision of an "irredeemable" Soviet totalitarianism, we have Kennan's vision of redemption in "ten to fifteen years" (which takes us from 1947 to, at the latest, 1962). From its inception, containment rested upon the dubious democratic faith that a totalitarian regime cannot last long and that such regimes are amenable to moral example, to compromise and restraint, and to the Western liberal reform tradition. From FDR's naive faith that he could charm Stalin, to "containment," . . . to "one man, one vote" in Vietnam and "the TVA on the Mekong," to "détente," the bankruptcy of the liberal tradition in foreign policy is abundantly clear.

It is this bankruptcy . . . which Solzhenitsyn's criticisms have served to illuminate. What annoys his critics is that they don't like being told how mistaken they have been. Solzhenitsyn has made two fundamental charges against the West: first, that Western foreign policy has been, and continues to be, a failure, for which the West will pay dearly; secondly, that Western intellectuals and policy-makers have unwittingly (and in some instances knowingly) aided and abetted Marxist totalitarianism not only in his own country but in other nations as well. Those who criticize Solzhenitsyn on the grounds that he is a Slavophile Russian nationalist, an anti-democratic Czarist autocrat, or a Christian mystic are simply resorting to *ad hominem* attacks as a means of ducking the issue.

Mr. Podhoretz correctly states that "*our* main business is with his [Solzhenitsyn's] challenge to *us*." What is most dismaying is that we should have needed Solzhenitsyn to point out so graphically and candidly all of the failures of Western policy toward Marxist totalitarianism. Perhaps it was necessary that a Russian render this vital service because Americans have always viewed the world through the blinders of their own democratic experience. . . .

Some means whereby the American democratic experience can be reconciled to the requirements of realism in foreign policy is crucial and has long been needed. Solzhenitsyn's grim message has only made more urgent a resolution of this vital America dilemma.

James E. Salyers
Ashmore, Illinois

To the Editor of Commentary:

I read Norman Podhoretz's article on Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn twice and found it very thorough, penetrating, and fair. Readers should remember the last paragraph for the rest of their lives! However, in dealing with Solzhenitsyn's alleged anti-Semitism, Mr. Podhoretz uses qualifiers . . . which dilute his defense of Solzhenitsyn to the point that it almost becomes an accusation.

It is my judgment as a Russian-American that American misconceptions and biases about Russians play right into the hands of international Communists. The Russian people will have a crucial role to play in liberating the Soviet Union and its satellites from Communism. The Russians were the first to raise arms against the Bolsheviks, and despite sixty-eight years of coercion, terror, and propaganda, still do not accept Communist teachings. My own four-year stay in the Soviet Union (1978-82) confirms this. I also learned that Russian intellectuals know much more about attitudes in the United States than I thought they would.

What they are looking for is American recognition of the distinction between the Russian people and the Soviet regime. They want our moral and ideological

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support for their struggle for freedom and human dignity in the Soviet Union. What can we offer these people? Academics espouse a convenient and false theory that Communist totalitarianism is simply a continuation of Czarist absolutism. "Liberals" proclaim that Russians corrupted and deformed the otherwise respectable theory of Communism. The United States government officially accuses the Russian people of subjugating everyone else in the Soviet Union (see the Captive Nations Law of 1959). The media equate Russia with the Soviet Union, Russians with Communists and Bolsheviks, and sometimes go even further by reversing roles ("Soviet" ballet versus "Russian" tanks). The American public absorbs all this as truth, and this can lead to extreme reactions. In the fall of 1983, a young Russian-American woman—Tania Zelensky—was killed in Vermont by a criminally-confused American "patriot" merely because of her Russian background.

Liberals of this nation accept national pride and patriotism as attributes of all nations but become very uneasy about Russian patriotism, which they automatically brand as authoritarian, anti-democratic, chauvinistic, imperialistic, etc. The ruling junta in the Soviet Union cannot ask for better propaganda than this, but freedom-loving Russians experience disappointment and bitterness. This is unfair to the Russian people as well as counterproductive and dangerous to the cause of freedom and democracy in the world.

ALEXIS B. BOGOLUBOV
Annandale, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

When the rulers (not leaders) of the Soviet Union were confronted with Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, they did not back down or collapse, contrary to what Mr. Podhoretz asserts. Rather, they acted intelligently to neutralize a threat when they expelled him. Solzhenitsyn's opinions, which he is too honest to conceal, have alienated people in the West and discredited the Russian dissident movement here. Nothing so useful as this could have been accomplished by sending him back to the Gulag or into internal exile. It is instructive to compare the treatment of Solzhenitsyn with the treatment of Andrei Sakharov, a genuine democrat whose opinions are congenial to us. Sakharov has been silenced, with the minimum necessary force—but silenced. . . .

GARTH PETERSON
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

When an influential group of American intellectuals, liberals and neoconservatives alike, has united against one man, a Russian scribbler who has taken refuge in a New England town, there ought to be something big at stake. Their own explanation is that Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn is a reactionary, a social conservative, an anti-democrat, a 19th-century romantic or paternalistic type, a strong statist, a nationalist, and whatever else.

There is an irony about this case, because true social conservatives like Patrick Buchanan, paternalistic statists like George Will, religious romantics like Malcolm Muggeridge, and extreme political right-wingers like James Burnham, are not really ostracized by the entire intellectual community. One probably should not take the interested parties' explanation in the Solzhenitsyn case at face value. An economist would rather think that Solzhenitsyn in some way did damage to the sense of existence and corporate welfare of the intellectual elite regardless of political persuasion and far beyond narrow Russian issues.

Perhaps a simple example can hint at the underlying reason. Jeane Kirkpatrick argued for the comparative advantage of an authoritarian state in some less developed, overpopulated countries of Latin America in the 1980's. Solzhenitsyn argued for the comparative advantage of an authoritarian state in Russia in the 1900's-1910's and in the hypothetical transitory period after Communism. Yet Kirkpatrick is acceptable, at least to neoconservatives, and Solzhenitsyn is not. The only explanation for the differential treatment I can see is that a corporate body of American intellectuals identifies itself with the power-sharing aspirations of Russian intellectuals of the 1900's-1910's and 1980's-1990's, while most Latin American intellectuals are integrated into their authoritarian political system anyway. Solzhenitsyn hit where it hurts most: he explored the issues of the costs of ideas, ideologies, and social arrangements of intellectuals to ordinary people.

I would argue that, from an economic perspective, Solzhenitsyn, contrary to the conventional wisdom, is an original and distinctive libertarian. Indeed, he is the only important libertarian who has ever published in the Russian language. (Libertarianism is alien to the Russian intellectual tradition. As Solzhenitsyn has noted, the Russian intellectual community was very special in never having understood true classical liberalism.) . . . In addition, I would argue that Solzhenitsyn is one of the most far-reaching modern libertarian thinkers on the issue of individual freedom and the sources of its curtailment above and beyond institutions. There is a special niche for Solzhenitsyn in modern social theory. It deals with the costs of ideas and the primacy of ideologies in the truncation of freedom and dehumanization of man.

Economists have long recognized the crucial role that ideas, and intellectuals as producers and transmitters of ideas, play in establishing restrictions on freedom. . . . As John Maynard Keynes put it in his celebrated dictum:

> The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed, the world is ruled by very little else. Practical men who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from academic scribblers of a few years back.

From this perspective most economists of different schools would be on Solzhenitsyn's side in his dispute with the majority of Soviet experts on the origins of Communist terror and the Gulag. Solzhenitsyn went to some length to elaborate and document his basic proposition: the main source of terror and forced labor on a mass scale is the imposition of ideas on people via ideological states. Solzhenitsyn's books, and *The Gulag Archipelago* in particular, are all about the price of ideologies to people. The precedence of ideologies to institutions of power and to groups in power constitutes Solzhenitsyn's case against Marxism and other socialist doctrines.

Unlike various pre-capitalistic economic systems and despotic states in the past, the modern socialist economy is built on a foundation of ideology. Past social-

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ist-type systems, dubbed by the Marxists "the Asiatic mode of production" (better known in Western literature as Oriental despotism) regulated already existing economies and life styles; they did not invent new ones. When Russia slipped in 1917 from liberal socialism to Communism, the economy was built upon an ideological model.

Economic historians are familiar with the fact that on the second day of the revolution, Lenin summoned an amateur economist, Yuri Larin, an expert on the German economic model of War Socialism, and ordered him to establish and expand the model in Russia. Within three years, 1917-1920, the system of collective transactions known as War Communism was built. Gross National Product declined to the range of 4 percent to 20 percent of the prewar level (estimates vary). Famine began in 1918 and continued through 1921-1922, although the system had to be suspended in early 1921. The official Soviet data reported the famine-related death toll in 1921-1922 in the range of 4.9 to 5.1 million. Elsewhere I have published my calculations of the human losses during the War Communism period between the censuses of 1917 and 1920: they amounted to 15.6 million.

The process of implementing the ideological model requires not only oppression of individual political opponents but, first and foremost, the mass destruction of whole social classes and ethnic groups who do not fit the new system. Previous, non-ideological despotic systems imposed constraints on human activities, but did not try to impose a new model which would require fundamental changes in behavior itself. Lenin's error, corrected later by the unappreciated economic whiz of the century, Joseph Stalin, lay in the fact that one cannot change basic modes of human behavior without making a so-called cultural revolution which would try to change human minds, human ways of doing things, individual preferences, and human nature. Until and unless this is done, the implementation of ideological designs on human guinea pigs reduces itself to negative selection, to the mass slaughter of unfit groups of human raw material. From Lenin's and Pol Pot's experience we know that the more ideologues hurry, the more they kill. The era of détente, when the USSR, Rumania, Poland, and East Germany began to exchange their undesirable subjects for Western subsidies, instead of murdering them, brought about an implicit liberal-conservative consensus that the slave-trade economic mode is a progressive one compared to uncorrupted idealistic Communism.

That is why conventional analogies between Communism and various despotic regimes in the past, whether in Russia or elsewhere, yield shallow results. The Communists or the Nazis may not seem to be much different from past tyrants, or even from the Chicago gangsters of the 30's for that matter, but this does not explain one crucial difference neglected by all theoreticians of continuity with the past. To wit, the despots' business is robbery, not murder. Murder is only the means of securing submission from the next in line to be robbed. Institutional robbery is but an extreme form of taxation. As good businessmen, despots make sure that their benefits exceed their costs, and thus they do not want to waste their taxpayers. Ideologues in a hurry to build a new economic system, on the other hand, opt for mass murder even if they destroy their sources of robbery. They allow the costs to exceed the benefits and forgo future gains because their main benefits are intangible and non-monetary ones. Their business is the imposition of ideologies, not taxes. Unlike even most conservatives, let alone liberals, Solzhenitsyn insists that Communism is not about power. Power for Communists is only a means for imposing ideologies on people.

Solzhenitsyn deprives intellectuals of the legitimacy of their professional alibi. They habitually blame the results of implementing ideologies on various despotic precedents which they can easily find in the past history of any country. They consistently ignore the abovementioned factor of the non-ideological, non-invented nature of pre-capitalist economies. Solzhenitsyn emphasized that Russia makes an especially difficult case for the theoreticians of continuity with the past. Russia was for all practical purposes a capitalist country, although most peasants did not own their land until the Stolypin agrarian reform of 1906-1910. However, most of its economic and social relations were based on laissez-faire individual transactions, and the general trend of development of the country was toward universal freedom.

Like leading neoclassical liberal economists, Solzhenitsyn argues for the preeminence of economic freedom and economic development over the political freedoms of interested groups. . . . Precisely this approach is at the center of his analysis of the economic and social policies of the Czarist government versus those of the democratic provisional government of 1917. The crucial issue is that of the Russian rural commune.

Solzhenitsyn interprets the commune as a more significant form of serfdom than feudal serfdom itself. The commune meant the predominant economic power of the state, not just of landlords, over the peasantry via taxes imposed on rural settlements collectively, with the ensuing absence of private ownership of land on the part of peasants. The collectivist system of the commune constrained peasants' incentives and economic development.

On many dozens of pages of the new two-volume version of *August 1914*, Solzhenitsyn describes how the Czarist government, under the premiership of Peter A. Stolypin, worked hard in the period 1906-1910 to abolish the rural commune institution and to establish private land property for peasants so that they would become a new class of farmers. Solzhenitsyn also describes how most of the parties of the newly emerged Russian parliament, both Left and Right, and most of the intellectual community, resisted this preeminent capitalist reform of Russian history.

The truth of the matter—a most unpleasant truth for Western admirers of the Russian intelligentsia and representative institutions—is that the alleged Russian liberals were not liberal at all in the sense of classical liberalism. In his preface to the Russian edition of *The History of Liberalism in Russia, 1762-1914* by Victor Leontowitch, Solzhenitsyn endorsed Leontowitch's analysis showing that the only liberal force, however inconsistent, in modern Russian history was the Czarist government. And the most anti-liberal, anti-capitalistic force was the Russian intelligentsia. Here, of course, is one of the painful points for Western critics of Solzhenitsyn, who have a natural affinity with Russian intellectuals and their fight against Czarism. When in February 1917 Czarism

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was finally overthrown, one of the first acts of the liberals who came to power was the abolition of the Russian parliament whose right to power-sharing they had ostensibly championed against the Czarist government for years.

The long-sought dictatorship of liberal intellectuals was established, known in Western literature as the short-lived Russian democracy. At that time one could really speak out, without fear of pejorative associations, and the first post-revolutionary issue of the *Journal of the Constitutional-Democratic Party* (*Vestnik Partii Narodnoi Svobody*) acknowledged in an article by the most sophisticated ideologue of Russian liberals, A. S. Izgoev, that the Russian liberal movement was in effect, in all of its objectives, a socialist movement. Victor Leontowitch noted that the program of the Constitutional-Democratic party did not mention the right to own private property on its long list of basic rights. (Interestingly, during the revolutionary year of 1917, the liberals of the Constitutional-Democratic party went even further than the radical socialists. In their agrarian program for the elections to the Constituent Assembly the liberals requested, in addition to the abolition of private land ownership, also the prohibition of land lease and rent among peasants.)

On the laundry list of proofs that Solzhenitsyn is anti-democratic, a major item is his critique of the February 1917 revolution and of that short-lived Russian democracy. As a matter of fact, this was not a freedom-oriented government, but a system that provided the highest degree of exclusive freedom for intellectuals in the entire course of Russian history. I would concede that socialism with a human face can and did exist; several cases are available, and Russia of 1917 was a textbook example. There was little economic freedom; land property rights were suspended for good; most prices were imposed by the government; grain was virtually confiscated from producers; the country was run by various arbitrary committees of competing intellectuals; there was unlimited political freedom for anybody to the Left of Center and a tolerable sliding scale of freedom for those to the Right of Center; there were political prisoners, though, mostly former Czarist officials, some of whom were kept in solitary confinement; former Prime Minister

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Boris V. Shturmer happened to die in jail a few days before the Communists took power, his main crime being that he was of German origin.

The most significant act of the liberal-socialist provisional government took place on June 28, 1917. On that day the government suspended the Stolypin agrarian reform, prohibited all land deals and transactions in Russia, and actually cancelled all previous land contracts, that is, in effect, abolished private ownership of land by peasants throughout the nation. . . . The great socialist experiment began, months before the Communists seized power, and it is no wonder that Solzhenitsyn is not particularly fond of this pseudo-democracy.

Solzhenitsyn suggests that scholars who ignore the historical facts of the Russian free-market economy, including its destruction under the liberal-socialist government, and derive Communism from Czarism and various Russian oppressive institutions are actually in search of a scapegoat. These authors want to salvage the general right of well-meaning intellectuals to impose their preferences on ordinary people—a right they confuse with freedom of expression. In this substitution of two rights, intellectuals ignore the costs of ideologies to ordinary people on whom social designs are imposed. Here we are at the heart of the matter. Intellectuals perceive Solzhenitsyn's case against ideology, socialism, and Marxism as a general assault on intellectual freedom. As Richard Pipes magnificently put it, it is horrifying to blame a German scribbler who died a hundred years ago for what happened to Russia many years after his death.

Professions have become more and more risky. Doctors are afraid of the epidemic of malpractice suits. Journalists are frightened by the tidal wave of libel suits. We hire lawyers to sue other lawyers for legal malpractice. As though this were not enough, along comes Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn with what many perceive as a case against wordsmiths for instigating mass murder. Naturally, the entire corporation, regardless of political persuasion, feels endangered. As individuals, many intellectuals still admire Solzhenitsyn. The recent hostility toward him across ideological borders is a corporate response. And it is a correct response because Solzhenitsyn is indeed against the corporate power of ideas, that is against ideologies.

Solzhenitsyn raised the issue, unexplored by economists as yet, of the hidden costs of ideas to people. Ideas are goods having two unique properties. First, they are both private goods, for they can in a sense be licensed, and public goods, for they can be used by others at no cost. Therefore, individual ideas may have tremendous hidden benefits for many generations. But ideas can also be abused by others at no cost to them and at real costs to the third parties. Therefore, individual ideas may also have tremendous hidden costs to the public. Ideas are public ills just as they are public goods. One cannot be sure with respect to any idea what its eventual effect may be. Ideas are thus time-bombs.

Secondly, those who produce and transmit ideas enjoy doing it. They circulate their merchandise even without any real market demand for it. Naturally, they would like to generate a demand for their goods. At the same time . . . their dealers are aware of the hidden costs to the public. There is always a danger that the costs of public goods or ills can be applied to the dealers in ideas. Historical precedents are abundant.

Some wordsmiths, myself included, can live with these sad facts of the market, namely low demand and potential bills. Others tend to circumvent the market. In order to do so, they incorporate ideas into loose or not so loose arrangements. These arrangements are ideologies. . . .

Ideologies, or Ideas Incorporated, substitute collective transactions between groups, classes, or nationalities for individual transactions. Ideologies work as collective arrangements, both within the network of intellectuals and when imposed on the public at large. Ideologies create collective behavior according to collective ideas and values which, in turn, should replace individual preferences. Here is the crucial matter for Solzhenitsyn: depotisms impose constraints, ideological systems impose changes on individual preferences, on human nature.

Precisely in order to impose themselves on people, incorporated ideas and corporate networks of intellectuals need to employ institutions and institutionalize themselves in the state. There is no other way for the ultimate implementation of ideological designs. This explains the great irony of why intellectuals, who as individuals need freedom more than anything else, settle for and impose upon the world the curtailment of freedom when acting as a corporate entity.

When collective behavior is substituted for individual behavior, the value of human life declines correspondingly. There are no limits in terms of human costs for ideological states. Once ideologies work as collective arrangements and constitute collective behavior, they take upon themselves the price an individual would otherwise pay for his or her actions. An individual murderer has a constraint: he may not be able to afford the price of murder, be it punishment, monetary penalty, revenge, or just expulsion from the market. Ideologies relax individual constraints, replacing them by collective constraints. Ideologies, Solzhenitsyn insists, provide an environment for mass slaughter and for any crime against humanity. People turn either into guinea pigs or henchmen. Ideologies contain within themselves and provide for their corporate members the very justification for enslavement and unlimited brutality. This applies, according to Solzhenitsyn, not just to Marxism alone, but to all ideologies, to all ideas which opted for incorporation into ideologies: Christianity, superiority of Western civilization, patriotism, Nazism, etc.

Solzhenitsyn's major conclusion is that the main source of evil in the world is the very existence of ideological arrangements. This is a very discomforting conclusion for all intellectuals as professional wordsmiths, much more disconcerting than economic philosophy at large which only relates various assaults on freedom to ideas and ideologues, but does not make a cost-benefit analysis in this respect. The dealers in ideas do not want to bear individual responsibility for their unpredictable and precarious goods, nor risk having their goods stored without being used on dusty shelves. They complain that Solzhenitsyn is out to get them. Actually, what Solzhenitsyn wants is to bring them back on the market.

This is what he proposed in his widely misunderstood *Letter to the Leaders of the Soviet Union*: separation of ideology and state.

The dealers in ideas complain that Solzhenitsyn is after intellectual freedom and is therefore against freedom as such. But Sol-

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zhenitsyn is only against collective free riders on peoples' backs.

MIKHAIL S. BERNSTAM
Hoover Institution on War,
Revolution and Peace
Stanford, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Solzhenitsyn has, by his life and works, . . . presented an accurate depiction of a Soviet hierarchical structure devoid of moral directive. . . . Because the scope and breadth of the Soviet controls sap all but the most meager attempts at rebellion or redirection, courage is not absent, it is only the means to convey and expand it that are wanting. . . .

Any writer creates a certain following and a certain level of critical opposition if he is of any significance. Solzhenitsyn spurs controversy . . . more severe than most. . . . Yet he offers almost the only voice . . . that carries sufficient clarity and strength to be heard. His singular recognition as Russia's conscience has survived, but only through his personal courage and vision. . . .

KINSLEY F. NYCE
Columbus, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's unflinching examination of "Solzhenitsyn's brand of Russian nationalism with its authoritarian coloration and its anti-Semitic potential" imparts a new and constructive direction to the long-running debate over the Nobel laureate's presumed attitudes toward democracy and toward the Jews. Mr. Podhoretz is right: in terms of political action, the debate is irrelevant; we must deal with Solzhenitsyn's life-or-death message to the West on its merits. To dismiss or ignore Solzhenitsyn's warnings because we see them as tainted by his "anti-democratic Slavophilia" is more a betrayal than a defense of democracy.

To be even-handed, the anti-Israel remarks that accompanied the recent anti-apartheid message of another Nobel laureate, Bishop Desmond Tutu, at the Jewish Theological Seminary very properly did not deter Jewish lay and professional leaders from responding to his message with protests against South Africa's official racism directed at that country's embassy and consulates. Nor should the Bishop's expressed dim view of Jews and Israelis blunt in any way our active opposition to apartheid.

As a footnote, the controversy over Solzhenitsyn's attitude toward the Jews, now well into its second decade, is far from settled. The individual experts appear unable to arrive at a conclusive judgment. Jeri Laber sees the author as "affected by the attitude of paranoid suspicion toward everything foreign that pervades Soviet society." While conjecturing that in Solzhenitsyn's ideal Russia, Jews would enjoy equal rights if thoroughly Russified and converted to Orthodox Christianity, Maurice Friedberg also records that Solzhenitsyn "was, in fact, vigorously defended from such charges of anti-Semitism by a number of Soviet Jewish activists, including Mikhail Agursky." Soviet authorities added their own distinctive touch to the discussion when they tried to discredit Solzhenitsyn by planting rumors that he was a Jew named Solzhenitser.

Salo Baron, after weighing the testimony, arrived some time ago at the term "lukewarm" for Solzhenitsyn's attitude toward the Jews —just about where Mr. Podhoretz comes out. A more rigorous characterization must await further and more positive evidence.

ROBERT A. RIESMAN
Providence, Rhode Island

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz finds "negative evidence" of Solzhenitsyn's anti-Semitism in the lack of "much sympathy" for Jews in his books, and in the "anti-Semitic potential" of his particular brand of Russian nationalism. In fact, it is not hard to find sympathetic references to Jews in Solzhenitsyn's books and particularly to Zionists, with whose strivings for national rebirth he tends to equate his own feelings for Russia. In Volume III of *The Gulag Archipelago*, he writes of the "indomitably cheerful boys and girls of fifteen, sixteen, and under" of the Hashomer Hatzair Zionist youth movement, exiled to Siberia by the Bolsheviks in 1927, and suggests that their "natural and noble aspiration" to recreate the land and confirm the faith of their ancestors should have received "the united support and aid at least of the European peoples." At one point, he makes the association even clearer, comparing the resilience of Russian nationalism and patriotism in the face of internationalist propaganda to "the miraculous birth and consolidation of Israel after 2,000 years of dispersal." He also questions (in his *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*, for instance) his country's support for the Arabs, going so far as to compare it with the Soviet nurturing of Hitler and Mao Zedong.

But even if such evidence of sympathy did not exist, it is surely outrageous to assume on the basis of "negative evidence" that Solzhenitsyn is an anti-Semite, or that he secretly blames the Jews for the Bolshevik revolution. He, of all people, deserves better, especially from those of us not prevented by ideological blinkers from appreciating his warnings to us and his efforts to stop us from falling victim to his country and from repeating Russia's terrible mistakes. As far as the vilification of Solzhenitsyn's political philosophy is concerned (the Russian nationalism with an "anti-Semitic potential," the "anti-democratic Slavophilia"), Richard Pipes has discussed this matter in his book, *U.S.-Soviet Relations in the Era of Détente*:

> Solzhenitsyn is a conservative and a nationalist. The Slavophiles believed in the uniqueness of the Russian soul and the universal message of the Russian people, and I don't see any of this in Solzhenitsyn. He loves Russia, instinctively and profoundly, but he does not romanticize Russian culture and never depicts the Russians as racially or spiritually superior. . . . Solzhenitsyn simply believes that the Soviet regime has inflicted and is continuing to inflict enormous harm on the Russian nation. He is conservative in the sense that he believes in strong government but, like all true Russian conservatives, he also believes in law and order and freedom of speech.

ARTHUR LYONS
Richmond, British Columbia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's article contains seven pages of splendid literary criticism—and just one page on Solzhenitsyn the anti-Communist prophet and the "terrible question." It is this last page that impels this letter, . . . specifically the passage where Mr. Podhoretz writes: "I am well aware that Solzhenitsyn's Western critics also include a number of staunch anti-Communists who oppose him not because he is a 'cold warrior' but because he espouses a species of Russian nationalism that is explicitly anti-democratic and (so they claim) implicitly anti-Semitic."

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Well, I am one of their number. Moreover, I believe there is disturbing evidence that Solzhenitsyn has gone beyond "implicit" to a more open though still subtly disguised anti-Semitism. Indeed, the entire grand plan of his series of historical novels seems aimed at showing that all of Russia's misfortunes of the 20th century were owing to "foreign" influences and that at every crucial turning point the leading actors were almost invariably of Jewish descent—from Trotsky in 1905; to Dmitri Bogrov, the Jewish anarchist and police agent who assassinated Stolypin (1911); to Parvus, whose bold scheme persuaded the German General Staff to send Lenin in a sealed train to the Finland Station to lead the Bolsheviks to victory; to the key role of Polish and Russian Jews in the Bolshevik seizure of power; to the Russian civil war and beyond. . . .

Mr. Podhoretz refers to a later, still untranslated, novel which also deals with the assassination of Stolypin and, it is charged, goes beyond implicit into open anti-Semitism. . . . But I believe I can point . . . to at least one example of outright anti-Semitism in Solzhenitsyn's translated work. In *Lenin in Zurich* a key character is Alexander (Israel) Lazarevich Helphand, known to history as Parvus, a Russian-born Jewish financier, revolutionary, and sybarite, who, as I mentioned, arranged for the sealed train to take Lenin to Russia. The Parvus portrait Solzhenitsyn paints is the crudest of caricatures—of a beast, bereft of all human features and impulses except insatiable greed for money (and female flesh). Here is Solzhenitsyn on Parvus:

> Parvus spoke again. . . . "It's pleasant to have perfect sight or perfect hearing, and it's just the same with wealth. . . ."
>
> But was his decision to get rich really the result of conscious thought, of a theoretical belief? No, it was *an innate necessity*, and his commercial impulses, his flair for *Geschäft*, his reluctance to let slip any profit which loomed in his field of vision, were not a matter of plans and programs, but almost *a biological function*, which proceeded almost unconsciously but unerringly. It was a matter of *instinct* with him; always to feel the movement of economic life around him, the emergence of disproportions, imbalances, gaps which begged him, cried out to him to insert his hand and extract a profit. This was so much a part of *his innermost nature* that he conducted his multifarious business transactions, which by now were scattered over ten European countries, without a single ledger, keeping all the figures in his head. [Emphasis added]

Here we have all the historic ingredients and code words for the portrait of the Jew from Marx's "On the Jewish Question" to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*—and, remember, this is written in Russian for a Russian audience who will well understand the Aesopian language, and applaud it.

For me, once in a lifetime is more than enough. I once surrendered my human and Jewish soul, overlooking and pooh-poohing anti-Semitism from Marx to Stalin in the name of Communism. I refuse to do so again in the name of anti-Communism.

And—not only anti-Semitism, but its evil twin, radical hatred of and contempt for democracy and democratic institutions. I do not need to be reminded of democracy's shameful weaknesses and retreats, but certainly, Reagan's election and re-election, for one, are testimony to the awakening of the American people to the Soviet totalitarian reality. We also have native voices, powerful and eloquent ones—Mr. Podhoretz foremost among them—who are rallying the nation in defense of our country, the free world, and our common democratic institutions. Solzhenitsyn has a different agenda: the overthrow of Leninist totalitarianism and its replacement by an Orthodox totalitarianism.

This intention, as well as Solzhenitsyn's deeply-rooted hatred of democracy, is most candidly revealed in his *Letter to the Soviet Leaders* (which, incidentally, is only a *modified* version, no doubt softened and sanitized for Western eyes; imagine what the original must have been like!). This is a most remarkable document and a fascinating revelation of his sycophancy and megalomania. It is an outright conspiratorial appeal to the leaders on the common ground of their Russian blood and heritage. There is nothing wrong (Solzhenitsyn says) with dictatorship; democracy is thoroughly alien to Russian character and history. Just rid yourselves of that foreign Marxism, and "You will still have absolute and impregnable power"—and Russia will return to its authentic roots in Christian Orthodoxy. Beginning on p. 50, there is a vile diatribe against democracy and a tribute to the "moral" basis of authoritarian order. As far as Solzhenitsyn is concerned, the rest of the world (and first of all, the Chinese) can burn in hell. Can the man revealed in this *Letter* be a moral leader and "prophet" for the West? In my view, he has surrendered his claim to that title.

And can we be indifferent to his dark goals for Russia, as human beings or as Jews (there are about two million Jews still prisoners there)? With Orthodoxy triumphant once more, how far behind will the Black Hundreds (now in their new KGB uniforms!) be? The ideology of Marxism, with its claims to universalism, at least acted as a brake on native anti-Semitism, but with Marxism replaced by Orthodoxy, the old-style Russian anti-Semitism will break forth unrestrained, perhaps closer to the Hitlerian model (the *other* totalitarianism).

Solzhenitsyn has nothing to teach us but the example of his courage. Let us honor him for that, but take our own path to our nation's and the world's salvation—*peace in freedom*. We and the West and, yes, the captive nations of Eastern Europe—Solidarity is worth a dozen Solzhenitsyns—have our own brave, powerful, and clear-minded leaders.

As far as Soviet "collapse" is concerned, what can Solzhenitsyn teach us? He did not, as Mr. Podhoretz asserts, "make the Soviet leaders back down and ultimately, perhaps, even collapse." The facts seem to be otherwise. When he became an intolerable nuisance, they just put him forcibly on a plane and shipped him out of the country. This ended his influence inside Russia, at least for the foreseeable future, and he has been reduced to delivering scolding lectures to the West. What collapse? And if there was no collapse, what did his courage lead to and wherefore the terrible and terrifying "question"?

I cannot accept Solzhenitsyn's "prophetic mission." The evidence compels me to believe that he does more harm now with his fierce assaults on the idea of democracy and his support for benighted autocracy and with his more and more explicit anti-Semitism than he does good with his anti-Communist teachings. He must be judged by what he is for as well as by what he

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is against. If those who reject him as a moral leader are "coward[s]," then so be it—but it hurts!

This letter is not a critique, it is a *cri de coeur*. Where does the truth lie?

ELIAS M. SCHWARZBART
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I know Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn very well; we even lived together in the Soviet Union. I can swear that he is no anti-Semite, and I shake Norman Podhoretz's hand for defending him against that terrible charge.

MSTISLAV ROSTROPOVICH
National Symphony Orchestra
Washington, D.C.

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

I cannot remember writing anything that has provoked so wide a range of conflicting responses as "The Terrible Question of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn." In the letters above, and in many private communications as well, I am taxed on the one hand for defending Solzhenitsyn and on the other for attacking him. Some correspondents are upset by the fact that I called Solzhenitsyn anti-democratic and others are outraged by the fact that I nevertheless held him up as a model. On the issue of Solzhenitsyn's attitude toward Jews as well, I am thanked by some for saying that I could find no overt anti-Semitism in his work, I am taken to task by others for even entertaining the suspicion that he might be an anti-Semite, and by still others for failing to denounce him as one. Finally, I am criticized for underrating Solzhenitsyn as a novelist and for overrating him as a writer.

I want to say that I take no comfort from this response. That is, I do not believe (as some do) that to be criticized from opposite sides is necessarily a sign that one has found exactly the right position in the center. In any case, the issue that has called forth so many letters that are at once passionate and thoughtful (not a common combination in the correspondence columns of any magazine, or for that matter anywhere else) is Solzhenitsyn and not my essay about him. Everyone wants an answer to Elias M. Schwarzbart's *cri de coeur*: "Where does the truth [about Solzhenitsyn] lie?"

Of course it is precisely that question I tried to answer in my essay, and having spent several more weeks pondering it once again in the light of the letters above, I find that I am content on the whole to stand where I stood in the essay itself.

Thus on the question of Solzhenitsyn's attitude toward democracy, I am unpersuaded that he is, of all things, a libertarian, even though Mikhail Bernstam's argument in support of that view is both fascinating and instructive. Nor has Edward E. Ericson, Jr. convinced me that I was wrong in calling

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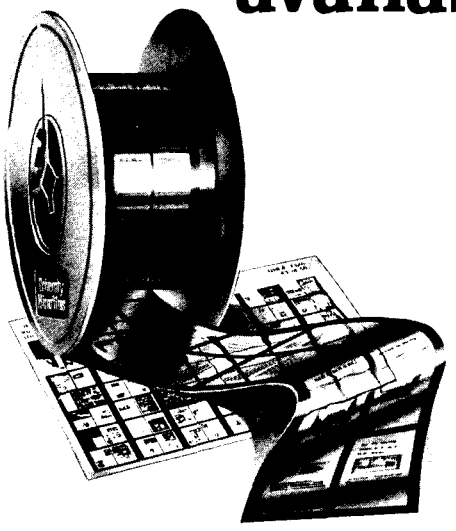

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Solzhenitsyn anti-democratic, even though Mr. Ericson (whose forthcoming and much-needed one-volume abridgement of *The Gulag Archipelago* has been approved for publication by Solzhenitsyn himself) speaks with the authority of a close and careful student of all the relevant texts. Indeed, his five assertions, with all of which I agree, are perfectly compatible in my judgment with what can legitimately be described as an anti-democratic position. At the same time, however, it is the kind of anti-democratic position with which I, as a virtual idolator of democracy, and *pace* Mr. Schwarzbart, can live, for the reasons I gave in the concluding paragraph of my article.

On the question of Solzhenitsyn's novels as against his autobiographical and historical writings, Kurt R. Sax asks me for "at least one example." Let me offer him, then, the contrast between two descriptions of the experience of being arrested and then processed through the early stages of imprisonment—the one at the end of *The First Circle* involving the fictional character, Innokenty Volodin, and the one in *The Gulag Archipelago* involving Solzhenitsyn himself. I submit that the latter is more vivid than the former, more evocative, more alive. But I grant that Mr. Sax is right in saying that the critical case I was trying to make can only be definitively established through many more such concrete examples.

Finally, there is the "terrible question" of anti-Semitism. I said in my essay that while I could find no overt anti-Semitism in any of Solzhenitsyn's translated works, neither could I make a first-hand judgment concerning the charge of anti-Semitism that has been levelled against the as-yet untranslated two-volume version of *August 1914*. I have now obtained a rough translation of selected passages from the controversial section of that novel —a lengthy account of the assassination of Stolypin in 1911 by a young anarchist of Jewish origin named Dmitri Bogrov—together with the script of a broadcast about it that was aired on Radio Liberty and that itself was accused of being anti-Semitic. So far as the broadcast goes, I can say without hesitation or qualification that the accusation of anti-Semitism is without merit. As for the novel, if the passages I have read are truly representative, I am content to stand on this issue too by what I wrote in my essay, and especially by the following words: "I can well imagine that in his heart [Solzhenitsyn] holds it against the Jews that so many of the old Bolsheviks, the makers of the Revolution that brought the curse of Communism to Russia, were of Jewish origin. . . ." Taking Solzhenitsyn's new book into account, I would now add Bogrov to the old Bolsheviks, but the general point would remain the same.

Mr. Schwarzbart sees anti-Semitism in the imagery with which Solzhenitsyn paints the character of one of those old Bolsheviks, Parvus, and others have also seen traces of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in the imagery surrounding the portrait of Bogrov. Yet no special point is made of Parvus's Jewishness in *Lenin in Zurich*; and in any event no connection at all is drawn between his Jewishness and his amazing gift for business and finance (which in his particular case may well have been instinctual and innate). On the other hand, Solzhenitsyn does make a special point of Bogrov's Jewish origin, and he even gives as one of Bogrov's motives an understandable desire to avenge the Jews for the persecutions they had suffered at the hands of the Czarist regime. Whether or not there is historical evidence for this interpretation of Bogrov's motives, the fact remains that Solzhenitsyn chooses to focus on the Jewish component of an act which in his view opened the way to the eventual triumph of Communism in Russia.

I can understand why some readers see anti-Semitism in this reading of Russian history. But in my opinion Solzhenitsyn's evident bitterness over the fact—and it is of course a fact—that revolutionaries of Jewish origin played so important a role in bringing Communism to Russia is overridden by his consistently fervent support of Israel. As Arthur Lyons indicates, he has always defended Israel; more than that, he has invidiously compared the courage of the Israelis in the face of their Arab enemies with the appeasement of the Soviet Union by the Western democracies.

To be sure, there was a time when it was possible for an anti-Semite to be a Zionist of sorts: indeed, Theodor Herzl thought that the anti-Semitic European governments would welcome the establishment of a Jewish state precisely because it would be a good way of getting the Jews out of Europe. But in our own day, Israel has become *the* touchstone of attitudes toward the Jewish people, and anti-Zionism has become the main and most relevant form of anti-Semitism. So much is this the case that almost anything Solzhenitsyn may think about the role of Jews in the past —or even in the post-Communist Russia of his dreams—becomes academic by comparison.

Ecological Compassion

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his article, "Kosher Ecology" [February] Newtol Press states that "children who are taught to be kind to animals are often surprised to find that kindness to animals is not listed among the Ten Commandments."

Yet in the fourth commandment, we are told that beasts of burden must share in resting on the Sabbath Day. It takes little imagination, especially for children, to understand that a day of rest is given to animals because Judaism requires that kindness and compassion be applied to animals as well as to humans. While only cattle are "listed," kindness to all animals is clearly implied in the Ten Commandments.

Jack D. Spiro

Richmond, Virginia

To the Editor of Commentary:

In "Kosher Ecology" Newtol Press posits a hypothesis which, however true, nonetheless ignores ethical considerations and sound hygienic practice.

In assuring us we were meant to eat the meat of a cow, he writes: "Our digestive tracts are predisposed to meat. . . . we have the guts . . . of [omnivores]." He warns that vegetarian diets could lead to kwashiorkor and that we can insure our protein nutrition by regular consumption of meat.

Now cow meat does indeed have neat packets of protein. But because of the way most beef cows are factory-farmed, deprived of elemental comfort (particularly those destined to be veal), and then slaughtered purely to fulfill human wants (*not* needs), there is a moral question that enjoins ethical vegetarians from supporting such practices. These vegetarians show their distaste by eschewing beef. Further, it is difficult to read a newspaper that does not warn us in some way of the dangers of an excessively high cholesterol count. In biblical

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times, animals were not factory-farmed and cholesterolemia did not, to our knowledge, exist.

There is a way out. Most vegetarians are not extreme; that is, they allow themselves the luxury of dairy products which, if consumed in modest amounts—or even with gusto in the case of fat-free milk and other fat-reduced dairy products—will avoid the dangers of a meat-laden diet. Then, too, some people allow themselves fish dinners. Strictly speaking, they may not be considered vegetarians since their dietary habits involve the harvesting of sentient creatures. But at least these fish do not suffer the lifelong hardships of factory farming.

Mr. Press's article, however sound in its other aspects, erroneously assumes that one must be either a plant-and-legume eater or a beef-eater. The factory farming and slaughter of sentient creatures for man's food is unnecessary and immoral.

HARVEY S. KARTEN
Brooklyn, New York

NEWTOL PRESS writes:

Jack D. Spiro and Harvey S. Karten deserve the gentlest of responses to their well-intentioned letters. Although perverse readings are possible, Mr. Spiro's interpretation of Scripture is traditional. If kindness to animals were commanded in plain words, instead of requiring exegeses, the arguments of those who speak for dumb beasts, such as Mr. Karten, would be spared much of their stridency. Mistreatment of cattle is abhorred by Mr. Karten, who might, however, feel less sanguine about his own sources of protein if he were to visit dairy farms.

Both writers share a common moral theme: we should refrain from abusing the beasts that serve us. It is in our self-interest to do so, even for the wrong reasons.

Lesser Evils

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Michael Ledeen's "How To Support the Democratic Revolution" [March] is a brilliant piece of work, beautifully written and carefully analyzed. It should be required reading for our liberal opinion-makers in the media and in academia.

As always, however, the difficulty lies in translating general principles, which Mr. Ledeen states so well, into actual practice under circumstances of turmoil, uncertainty, and confusion.

Mr. Ledeen correctly notes that in Iran we "conspicuously failed to come to his [the Shah's] side in his time of crisis." Let us recall, however, the scenes from Iran in the summer and fall of 1979: tens of thousands of people protesting and rioting in the streets of Teheran and other cities, calling for the overthrow of the "hated" Shah and his "oppressive" regime.

Under these circumstances, how could the United States *effectively* have come to the aid of the Shah? We surely could not have sent American troops into Teheran to help quell the rioters. Would strong and public diplomatic support and/or presidential pronouncements about our good friend the Shah have changed anything? I doubt it. In fact, there was reason to believe that public American support for the Shah's regime would only increase the hostility toward us of the successor regime.

I appreciate Mr. Ledeen's urging of preventive measures—years of "steady pressure on the Shah to undertake a gradual liberalization of his regime"—but if these measures are either not employed or are not successful, and if we face a similiar situation in the future, what *specific* measures would he have the United States undertake?

ROBERT S. MILLER
Princeton, New Jersey

MICHAEL LEDEEN writes:

I thank Robert S. Miller for his kind words, and his good question. We could have done various things for the Shah at various times. Obviously, Mr. Miller has chosen the most difficult moment, the late autumn of 1979. (Not the summer, by the way. At that time all was calm.)

In any case, at that point the Carter administration was faced with two unattractive options. We could have told the Shah to use force if necessary, even lethal force, or we could have decided to shift our support to those elements within the opposition we believed acceptable. In practice we did nothing, alternately hinting to the Shah that he ought to do something and warning him not to do anything to violate our very high standards of human rights. We also withheld instruments of moderate crowd control, like tear gas and rubber bullets, thereby ensuring that if the Shah did take action it would be nasty. The upshot of it all is that the Shah was paralyzed, waiting for something good to happen, or for the United States to make its wishes known.

James Schlesinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski both believed the stakes were so high that we should have been willing to throw our unequivocal support behind the Shah, and I believe they were right. To be sure, it would not have been pleasant, either for the people in the streets of Teheran or for those in Washington who supported repression in Iran. But consider the alternative—Khomeini. Can anyone argue in good faith today that we did better for American interests, for the cause of democracy, or for the human condition of the Iranian people, by staying away from the nastiness that support for the Shah would have entailed? In short, the lesser of two evils is a legitimate and sometimes necessary policy.

Mr. Miller doesn't like general principles as much as actual practice, but without the right general approach, the actual practice usually goes astray. And the general principles in such cases are, first, if you've been supporting the democratic revolution all along, people can count on you, and unpleasant surprises are accordingly less likely (specifically, if we had pushed for democratization in Iran from the beginning, we wouldn't have had the September surprise); second, when your ally's very existence is threatened, reformist options are irrelevant and you have to face up to basic choices (specifically, don't lecture the Shah on human rights when you have to decide whether he's going to survive); third, always look at the real alternatives and not at some abstract standard of morality (specifically, to decry the Shah's human-rights performance and consequently withhold support was disastrous because we thereby permitted a far greater evil—Khomeini—to triumph).

Similarly, today some of the abstract moralists act as if we shouldn't support the Nicaraguan resistance because some of the contras used to serve Somoza. Aside from the fact that the same applies to the Sandinistas, if we abandon the resistance we will thereby sanction the triumph of an imperialistic totalitarianism in Nicaragua that threatens democracy all over Central America, and that quite explicitly intends to carry its violent struggle to us.

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The Perversion of Foreign Aid

Nick Eberstadt

THE ATTITUDE of the American people toward the world's poor, and toward our government's effort to attend to their distress, is seldom examined by those who frame our policies toward the international economy and the less developed regions of the earth. It is instructive, however, to listen to what the American people have to say.

Surveys of public opinion consistently show a deep concern about the plight of needy people in other countries—a concern higher among the public at large than among those groups pollsters designate as "public-opinion leaders." While attitudes about most other aspects of foreign policy tend to vary with the times, the public's interest in aiding the desperately poor has remained remarkably constant. In 1982, as in previous years, nearly 60 percent of the respondents polled by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations said they viewed "combating world hunger" as a "very important" objective for the United States; only 5 percent felt it to be "not important." As in previous surveys, combating world hunger ranked far ahead of "protecting American business abroad," and even ahead of "defending our allies' security" or "matching Soviet military strength," as an international concern. Though these results may surprise some who consider themselves experts on foreign policy, they are not a fluke; to the contrary, they are in keeping with a wide range of findings from other polls.

Paradoxically, while the public's commitment to aiding the wretched of the earth gives all the signs of an unwavering consensus, its attitude toward foreign-aid *programs* appears to be thoroughly hostile. Since 1974 the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations has asked respondents to volunteer their views of "the 2 or 3 biggest foreign-policy problems facing the nation today." "Reducing foreign aid" is always one of the two top concerns. In these surveys neither the arms race, nor the threat of nuclear war, nor even relations with the Soviet Union has yet evoked the sort of response elicited by the idea of cutting foreign aid, which is by far the most unpopular program in the federal budget. In 1978—foreign aid's "best" year in the Chicago Council surveys—over four times as many interviewees favored cutbacks as approved of increases, leaving the program with a net rating of minus 39 percent. Even at the height of the disillusionment with the Vietnam war or on the eve of the "Reagan revolution," neither defense nor domestic welfare was held in such low esteem.

What can explain these strong—and yet apparently contradictory—feelings about helping the world's poor? One possibility is that they are only a specific example of a more general proposition: that the public's opinions about international problems are ill-considered, volatile, and vaguely irrational. But there is also a perfectly logical explanation for this ostensible paradox. The American public may think its government's programs for aiding the world's poor defective, or positively injurious. On this view, the stronger the public's commitment to the world's poor, the more forcefully it would reject programs that seem untrue to that commitment.

Interestingly enough, America's elites do not appear to share the deep misgivings of the public about U.S. foreign-aid programs. According to a number of surveys, the overseas-relief, development, and security policies which our people find so objectionable are considered utterly unexceptionable by our "public-opinion leaders." Such surveys typically indicate that leaders view foreign aid as a "non-issue."

This cleavage between the public and the opinion-makers is highly significant. At different times in American history the general public has come to an understanding about the world before its leaders. We are now at such a point. The American people seem to recognize an important fact about world affairs that continues to elude their leaders—namely, that the American government's efforts to bring relief, prosperity, and security to impoverished peoples in other countries have gone seriously wrong.

NICK EBERSTADT, a visiting fellow at the Harvard Center for Population Studies, is the author of *Poverty in China* and the editor of *Fertility Decline in the Less Developed Countries*. The present article, along with his earlier "Famine, Development & Foreign Aid," which appeared in our March issue, is part of a larger work on American foreign-aid policy.

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II

THE descent of our foreign-aid policies from their original purposes is a poignant story. Its outlines must be recounted, if only to recall how far we have strayed from our initial objectives and principles.

America's policies toward the international economy and the "backward areas" (as the "South" was then called) were fashioned, in the early days after World War II, by idealists whose vision had been tempered by hard times. America had suffered through more than a decade of economic depression, and had then spent four years embroiled in a war of total mobilization against anti-democratic regimes that had gained control over several of the world's major industrial societies. America's leaders were determined that such events not be repeated.

Their ideas for rebuilding the world economy were shaped not only by their understanding of the causes behind the Depression, but by their memory and understanding of the international economic order which had existed before World War I.

As they knew, and as economic historians have since confirmed, the late 19th- and early 20th century was an era of widespread economic growth —not only in sovereign or imperial nations, but in many colonies as well. This growth had been made possible by technical advances, but it was propelled by a dramatic increase in trade and international flows of private capital, which served as conduits for the transfer of information, productive knowledge, and skills.

Though the architects of the postwar order wished to rebuild this framework, there was to be a crucial difference. Before World War I a system of empires and colonies had provided the political underpinnings for the financial and monetary arrangements of the world. America's leaders, however, were anti-imperialist; before World War II and after it, they were proponents of decolonization and national self-determination. Thus, toward the end of the second war, American statesmen began to create a "liberal international order" in which it would be possible to have, in effect, both bread and freedom: to capture the most beneficial economic workings of the trade and finance arrangements associated with the "Age of Imperialism" and at the same time to protect the weaker peoples of the world against imperial subjugation and anti-democratic oppression.

The instruments devised to meet these objectives were, respectively, the Bretton Woods institutions —the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank)—and the United Nations. In laying a base for international material progress, perhaps the more important of the economic agencies was the IMF. In theory, it provided a mechanism for the international convertibility of all members' currencies; in practice, it established the American dollar as the world currency, the new medium of international trade. This guarantee removed an enormous risk in international trade, one which had proved so dangerous between the wars for rich and poor regions alike.

Investment as well as trade had been a vehicle of international progress in the earlier era. The World Bank was to attend to some of the risks of putting private capital to work in poor or devastated areas. The Bank's Articles of Agreement outlined its mission succinctly: "to facilitate investment for productive purposes . . . to promote private foreign investment by means of guarantees . . . and when private capital [is] not available on reasonable terms, to supplement private investment." The U.S. Treasury Department, which would underwrite much of the World Bank's operations, had a similar understanding of its purposes. In the words of one analyst: "The Bank would encourage private investors to undertake international lending by guaranteeing international loans *through the usual investment channels* and by participating with private investors in such loans. *In exceptional cases,* where private capital is not available, the Bank would make loans out of its own resources" (emphasis added).

The key to improving a nation's access to international capital, the early statements of the Bank explained, was its "investment climate." This phrase is no longer in common usage, but its meaning remains fairly clear. It referred, if obliquely, to the economic and social policies promoted by the state—including its tax policies, its budget policies, its monetary and credit policies, its foreign-exchange policies, its trade policies, its public-investment policies, its legal system, and the extent to which formal and informal restrictions were placed upon people engaging in economic activity. The World Bank was, in these early days, extremely serious about the question of "investment climate." It went so far as to sanction a practice known as "strategic non-lending" —abstaining from participation in loans to certain nations, even if they appeared credit-worthy in the technical sense, because their economic policies were leading them, and the world community, in the wrong direction.

III

WHAT was the right direction? In his last address to Congress, President Roosevelt warned that "we cannot succeed in building a peaceful world unless we build an economically healthy world." "Economic health," in Roosevelt's vision, depended upon both the international environment *and* the actions of individual countries. Even in regions of severe wartime devastation or acute mass poverty, recovery

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and growth were to be stimulated primarily by domestic effort. Roosevelt was firm on this point:

> The main job of restoration is not one of relief. It is one of reconstruction which must be largely done by local people and their governments. They will provide the labor, the local money, and most of the materials. The same is true for all of the many plans for the improvement of transportation, agriculture, industry, and housing that are essential to the development of the economically backward areas of the world.

Roosevelt and the men around him were not hostile to the idea of foreign aid. They had, after all, devised the Lend-Lease program, by far the greatest foreign-aid program the world had ever seen (over $200 billion by today's prices). It was their unshakable conviction, however, that foreign aid should meet exacting standards. Its purposes were expected to be clear, and morally legitimate; the programs that it fashioned should prosecute these objectives directly and effectively.

American relief efforts during and immediately after World War II were conditioned by this understanding, and proved eminently successful. Protracted war had destroyed the local economic base throughout Europe and Asia. In many areas, mass starvation seemed a real possibility; in the months after defeat, for example, Germany's infant-mortality rate was higher than Sahelian Africa's is thought to be today. To prevent a widespread loss of life, the United States had prevailed upon the United Nations to organize a Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA). UNRRA was charged with providing "only those immediate relief needs which cannot be met out of the resources of the countries involved." Since it was understood that the danger of postwar famines was a temporary problem, and would resolve itself as civil order and economic activity resumed in stricken regions, UNRRA's mandate was explicitly limited. UNRRA made clear its intentions to pull out after the first adequate harvest in an afflicted country—and kept its word. By 1947 the threat of mass famine in non-Communist nations had been averted; for the first (and possibly last) time in the UN's history, an agency was disbanded after successfully meeting the problem it was created to solve.

The next great application of American public resources in foreign lands, the Marshall Plan, was likewise considered a resounding success. The "European Recovery Act" brought together a variety of heretofore disparate American concerns. In contributing to the restoration of the Western European economies, it created a natural bulwark against the imperialistic ambitions of our erstwhile allies, the Soviets; it strengthened the foundations of the postwar economic order, which would require larger markets and greater supplies of private capital than America itself could offer if the rest of the world was to be drawn rapidly out of poverty; and it satisfied the American urge to assist endangered peoples overseas who shared our ideals and values.

In retrospect it can be seen that the accomplishments attributed to the Marshall Plan—a venture originally undertaken as a gamble—may have inspired a certain confusion about the potentialities of foreign aid under less extraordinary circumstances. Its unique marriage of strategic, economic, and humanitarian objectives would later give rise to the notion that foreign aid *naturally* wedded these distinct, and often contradictory, concerns.

In addition, the rapid Western European recovery was to mislead proponents of aid about the pace of progress that might be expected in underdeveloped areas, since it was widely forgotten that Western Europe was *restoring* itself to prewar levels of production activity. And with the restoration of Western Europe's economic health, the actual role of specific Marshall Plan policies in advancing or retarding recovery and economic progress was quickly submerged. Today only a handful of economic historians seem to remember that some of the policies advocated by Marshall Plan administrators, and tied to Marshall Plan aid, seemed to lead to inflation, a diminution of local savings, and economic stagnation—or that West Germany's economic boom did not begin until after Konrad Adenauer and his finance minister, Ludwig Erhard, had repudiated and reversed the policies which Marshall Plan aid was financing in other Western European nations.

IV

"Development assistance" to low-income countries began in 1949, on the heels of the Marshall Plan. It was a new and radical idea in international relations. Unlike emergency relief, it was not framed in response to disaster. Unlike reparations, it was a state-to-state resource transfer prompted by volition, not indemnity. Unlike military aid or security assistance, it was not meant, in any immediate sense, to apply American will to distant regions of the earth.

Development assistance, as outlined in President Truman's Point Four program in his 1949 State of the Union address, reflected the American preference that other peoples avail themselves of the good things the 20th century had to offer, including the skills and knowledge which made mass affluence possible. It was consistent with our vision of the postwar world. The United States had already created an international monetary and financial system which could contribute to a nation's economic advancement. We were now stating our willingness to help interested governments move their countries into the international economic updraft that the new order had made possible.

The idea of such assistance—of fostering the competence of new governments to deal with their nations' economic problems—received an enthusi-

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astic reception from the world community. By the end of 1949 the United Nations had unanimously endorsed an international plan of action modelled directly on America's Point Four programs, though more modest in resources and scope.

The leitmotif of development assistance in its first few years was the connection between the policies and actions of governments in poor nations and their economic consequences. This connection was taken to be inescapable and obvious. Alluding to the "shortage" of Western capital in the less developed countries—a problem that agitated many leaders in Latin America, Asia, and Africa at the time—Truman's Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs observed that "the real decision must be made by these countries themselves, since only they can decide whether they want our capital to participate in their development. If they want it, they must, in turn, create the 'climate' to attract it."

Nor was this perspective a matter of partisan dispute. Early in 1953, President Eisenhower's Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs warned Congress that the limits on the effectiveness of our technical-assistance programs came from the attitude of recipient governments: "There is a strong tendency to build steel mills when the best economic interest of that particular country would be served by growing a little more food. . . . But the attraction of being self-sufficient, of having these monuments of industry . . . seems to be so great that we have difficulties in getting them to understand wherein their own economic salvation lies."

Development assistance as America envisioned it, unfortunately, was not quite what the new, nationalist elites in less developed countries were looking for. Regardless of their professed political ideologies, these new regimes were almost uniformly preoccupied with augmenting the power of the state apparatus under their control. To many stewards of new states in the 1950's, the goal of building state power seemed, indeed, to be threatened by the liberal international economic order the United States was promoting. An orientation toward international markets and free flows of foreign capital might remove vital decisions about national destiny from their hands. What seemed more in keeping with their desire to focus the national will through the medium of government was some system of central economic planning.

This approach to "nation building," later dignified by the title "development planning," was in fact an application and perfection of the techniques the combatant powers had used to marshall and apply resources against one another in World War II. Around the globe, poor societies in the 1950's were, in effect, putting themselves on a wartime footing. They were going long on steel and short on food; relying on trade where they must, but on autarky where they might.

The extent to which this emphasis on command planning clashed with the American conception of the function of development assistance was not immediately appreciated in the United States—where, after all, the popular preoccupation was with demilitarizing the economy as quickly as possible, and with disassembling wartime economic controls so that the tempo of civilian life might resume. If this conflict in time helped bring about a very large shift in American ideas, in the early 1950's such changes were still far off. The United States had not only firm principles, but clear operational rules by which to guide its foreign-aid policies. It attempted to separate overseas humanitarian aid from the economic interests of lobby groups at home. It made scrupulous distinctions between grants (which were charitable) and loans (which were to be commercial). Perhaps most importantly, it let it be known that there was a difference between military aid and development assistance, and that the demarcation was essential to the purposes and prospects of both programs.

V

One by one, these precepts about foreign aid were to fall.

The first abrupt departure occurred in 1954, when Congress authorized the Food For Peace program. On the East coast, Food For Peace was justified as a humanitarian gesture by which American bounty could be put to the service of a hungry world; in the Midwest its workings were perhaps more honestly discussed. The champion of Food For Peace, Senator Hubert Humphrey, represented Minnesota, a state then beset by agricultural "overproduction." So long as the farmers' ability to produce outstripped the market's demand for their produce, competitive restructuring of the farming industry would be inevitable, and, just as inevitably, it would be small farmers who would be "restructured" off the land. These were Senator Humphrey's constituents, and the Food For Peace program, PL 480, addressed their problems. PL 480 would authorize the purchase of massive quantities of grain and other foodstuffs, subsidizing their sale in the markets of poor nations or giving food outright to governments.

For American farmers, the immediate impact of PL 480 legislation was incontestably beneficial. For the poor nations, the consequences were more ambiguous. Heavily subsidized American imports very often drove down local food prices; while this might not have raised qualms in capitals intent upon forced-pace industrialization, it nevertheless caused problems in rural hinterlands, where standards of living were, typically, significantly lower than in the cities.

What is more, recipient governments often resold the food America gave them for cash, so that they could pursue projects that foreign lenders

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had denied them as economically unwise. A concessionary device permitting recipient governments to repay "food loans" in their own local currencies relieved them of the pressure to value their foreign exchange realistically, with predictable consequences for both budget discipline and export incentives. (This also paved the way for several international economic panics, as when the Indian government suddenly discovered it owed the United States more rupees than it had in central reserves—and nationalized the entire private banking system to compensate.)

Perhaps most tellingly, only a tiny fraction of PL 480's allocations was earmarked for regions hit by famine or disaster. This fact was not lost on overseas observers, who had been warned by Marxists and other anti-Americans that the U.S. would export its own domestic economic problems and call the result charity.

The next radical deviation from principle came over the issue of "soft," or subsidized, loans. In 1946, American authorities had resolved that concessionary loans to foreign governments would have no place among the techniques of American statecraft; such loans, it was felt, would create a dangerous and needless confusion between charity and commerce. After our first soft loan, a large one to the United Kingdom to stabilize the sterling-based currencies, our National Advisory Council on Monetary and Financial Problems, which had sanctioned the offering, stated: "It is the view of the Council that the British case is unique, and will not be a precedent for loans to any other country."

Within ten years, soft loans were becoming a preferred vehicle for U.S. foreign aid. Soft loans seemed to vitiate the need for hard choices. Skeptical inquiries from taxpayers over specific projects could be deflected by assurances that the U.S. expected in time to be fully repaid on its principal. Foreign governments would hear that soft loans gave them great financial leverage, since along with the concessionary bequest the arrangement provided a large pool of working capital. Soft loans thus seemed to offer protection to those aid initiatives whose usefulness was most open to question; yet this naturally made the loans a magnet for precisely those proposals which were least justifiable and most likely to waste resources. If soft loans at this time seemed like a "cheap" way of paying for foreign aid, it was only because one of their major costs had been forgotten: their impact on beneficiary governments' conception of, and attitude toward, capital transfer from abroad.

In 1948 the president of the World Bank had urged member nations not to fall into the trap of soft lending; by 1959, the idea of a soft-loan facility *at the Bank* was gaining acceptance; by 1961, this facility, the International Development Authority (IDA), was established under World Bank auspices, and with American blessings. Two decades earlier, a principal American proponent of a World Bank, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, had said that the institution he was proposing would "scrupulously avoid undertaking loans that private investors are willing to make on reasonable terms." IDA was true to the late Secretary's wish only in the sense that the sorts of projects it encouraged, and the terms that it financed, were generally unlikely to be attractive to private investors.

VI

The most fateful departure from previously enunciated principles of foreign aid, however, concerned the separation of military and development assistance. The Eisenhower years saw a profound shift in American foreign-aid patterns. Between 1949 and 1953, military grants and political aid for beleaguered but friendly regimes had accounted for scarcely a sixth of our foreign aid; between 1953 and 1961 they made up over half our bequests.

Security assistance was a calculated response to a pressing problem. Shortly after the victory of the Communist armies on the Chinese mainland, Communist forces from North Korea attacked our allies in the South, and drew us into war. Strengthening the defensive capability of the states in our alliance system seemed the surest way to deter further outside attacks. There was also a widespread threat, in relatively open societies, of internal subversion by armed, and generally antidemocratic, domestic groups. Security assistance was to address this problem as well: it included not only military aid but police training, political advice, covert activities, and unrestricted financial bequests just to buy time (and thereby, with luck, political stability).

Military/security assistance proved to be a highly effective program. With American aid, South Korea and Taiwan were able to secure themselves against potential enemies. Greece and Turkey were stabilized and strengthened, both militarily and politically. Insurgencies were suppressed in, among other places, the Philippines and Thailand. In Iran, a demagogue who was deemed anti-American was turned out of office, and the Shah (whom we took to be pro-American) was returned to the throne from which he had been deposed. There were many other, less heralded, achievements as well.

In the late 1950's and early 1960's, security assistance had widespread public support, while development aid was not nearly so well regarded. Hence, to win acceptance for their overall foreign-aid programs, American statesmen began to draw on the legitimacy of security assistance to protect, and even conceal, development aid.

The process began with a change in legislation: the 1953 Mutual Security Act, which for the purposes of congressional appropriations linked development aid to security assistance. Even so, the

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two programs were kept operationally—and conceptually—distinct. Eric Johnston, at the time Eisenhower's Point Four adviser, spoke for the administration when he said, "I think the Point Four program . . . should not in any way be confused with military aid to countries."

That distinction was lost during the Kennedy administration. President Kennedy went so far as to argue that development aid *was* security assistance, and therefore that advocates of a strong American security posture should support development bequests. As he put it: "I urge those who want to do something for the United States, for this cause, to channel their energies behind the new foreign-aid program to help prevent the social injustice and economic chaos upon which subversion and revolt feeds." The "new foreign-aid program" to which he referred was the Agency for International Development (USAID), the organization which supervises and administers America's development programs in less developed countries to this very day.

In attempting to broaden and strengthen the domestic constituency behind development spending, President Kennedy had, perhaps accidentally, fundamentally altered the understanding of what development assistance was supposed to be. No longer was it a transfer of skills and a building of basic infrastructure so that governments of poor societies might better take advantage of the economic opportunities afforded them by growing international markets. It was now a program to quell domestic discontent in low-income regions—linking aid to stability through a series of complex syllogisms which ultimately equated rising living standards with diminishing political opposition. This attitude, at once cynical and naive, suggested that counterinsurgency and the diffusion of agricultural research were part and parcel of a single process, differing only in degree. Given this view of the world, Vietnam was in one sense an accident only waiting to happen.

VII

EVEN twenty years after the start of rapid escalation, America's prosecution of the war in Vietnam remains a sensitive issue. Though we may still await a balanced and comprehensive account of America's strategies and actions in the Vietnam war, it is not too soon to point out some of the ways in which that war affected our development-assistance policies.

In the first place, development assistance came to be dominated by Vietnam itself. By 1966, that one country was receiving over 43 percent of AID's worldwide development grants, and a similar proportion of AID's talent, energy, and personnel was being applied to problems in Vietnam. The war, moreover, prompted a drastic change in the understanding of what development aid was all about. A violence-rent agrarian society, in which broad stretches of terrain were under the shifting control of contesting armies, was hardly suitable ground for the sort of technical assistance and private investments that the Point Four program had sought to encourage. Development policies had to be adapted, and on the spot; the mutations which evolved had little to do with self-sustaining growth or any of the other desiderata of an earlier generation of technical-assistance policies.

As the war proceeded, AID was drawn into such efforts as the "strategic hamlet" and the "civilian relocation" programs. While these may have served a justifiable military purpose, their economic results were almost the exact opposite of development—at least as that word had previously been understood. By feeding, clothing, and housing villagers who had been dispossessed from areas turned into "free-fire zones," the United States maintained, and often improved, their material living standards, but the economic base which might sustain these people was simultaneously being destroyed.

In subordinating economic objectives to military ones, AID exposed itself to the charge of "waste." In a technical sense, such allegations were valid—and indeed, had to be. The criteria for running a war and running a business are fundamentally at odds. Military effort is judged by its effectiveness in securing objectives; the economic efficiency of subsidiary operations is at most a secondary consideration, and the concept of productivity is, strictly speaking, irrelevant.

There was a greater, more overarching problem in Vietnam, which affected aid and everything else the American government was attempting. This was the notorious "credibility gap" separating our actual intentions, policies, and actions in Vietnam from the official descriptions of them. In allowing this gap to develop, the government encouraged the perception that our policies were considered illegitimate by the very men who were framing them. This could only have painful and continuing reverberations in a nation where domestic support for the international application of American power has so typically hinged on the moral purpose implicit in the initiative.

As distrust between the executive and legislative branches deepened over the conduct of the war, foreign aid became a battleground for a most unfortunate sort of guerrilla warfare. Frustrated by the direction of foreign policy in general, Congress resolved to restrict the government's ability to move economic policy in any direction whatsoever. Within Congress a tactical coalition arose between the "Left" (against the war) and the "Right" (against waste); separated by most issues, these two forces united in their hostility to foreign aid. They did not kill AID, but in retrospect, what they did do might have been worse.

By denying AID "obligational carryover authority," or the right to keep the use of money it had not committed by the end of the fiscal year; by

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subjecting AID to a process known as "Congressional Notification," which required the agency to produce two detailed budgets a year for congressional inspection, and in effect gave Congress a line-item veto over even comparatively small projects; and by requiring legalistic impact statements—often as many as 75—for even modest projects within programs, Congress severely restricted the ability of the agency to engage in "development," and forced AID administrators and project officers to shift their attention from the success of their efforts in the field to the success of their entreaties on the Hill. Sparing AID its institutional life, Congress guaranteed that the organization would be severely and permanently crippled.

VIII

The efforts to paralyze AID were symptoms of a broader problem of the Vietnam and post-Vietnam era: American foreign policies had come to lack legitimacy in the eyes of a substantial portion of Congress and the public. A period of groping and confusion had begun, during which America's foreign economic policies in general, and foreign-aid policies in particular, broke away from the bipartisan principles which had been established in the early postwar years, and at a speed which sometimes suggested free fall. The events which derailed our foreign-aid policies were specific and discrete, yet in retrospect they seem to form a single, continuing chain of practical and moral errors.

In 1971 and 1972 President Nixon's foreign-aid proposals were defeated in Congress; funding for them was arranged only through a catch-all "continuing resolution" at the end of each session. To restore congressional confidence in the foreign-aid program, and in the presidential purposes behind it, a new code for American development programs was worked out. These were written into law in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1973 and the Mutual Development and Cooperation Act of the same year. At the time, these acts were described as a compromise. They read today as something very different.

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1973 states as directly as such legislation can that our postwar policies toward poorer nations had been a failure: "The conditions which shaped the United States foreign-assistance program in the past have changed. . . . [O]ur relations with the less developed countries must be revised to reflect these realities." The problem, it was suggested, was that the strategy of export-oriented, self-sustaining growth which we had advocated since the 1940's did not actually benefit the common people of the countries it transformed: in the words of the Mutual Development and Cooperation Act, "economic growth does not necessarily lead to social advancement by the poor."

The Foreign Assistance Act implied that American power abroad had been secured through alliances with local leaders who had little interest in the welfare of their own public. Hence, the new American approach to foreign aid "should be . . . targeted on the basics"—meaning that it should be judged by its direct and immediate impact on the living standards of the poorest strata of the recipient nations. "Through the restructured program the United States would be telling the developing countries . . . 'Do not forget the immediate needs of your poorest people.' . . ."

The "reforms of 1973" had sweeping consequences for American development efforts. In establishing "basic human needs" as the ultimate arbiter by which development would be judged, they shifted the purpose of AID from assisting self-sustaining growth to affecting living standards through emergency-style distribution of outside food, medicine, clothing, and materials for shelter. These "basic human needs" stipulations came on top of the operational restrictions which had already been imposed on AID, with their implicit bias against development proposals with deferred benefits or with consequences principally measured in efficiency or productivity.

Thus, American bequests increasingly came to be seen as a means of facilitating a steady flow of funds to the governments of less developed countries for use in whatever purposes they might choose. Though AID administrators could argue that their grants were "tied" to various purposes or conditions, local leaders generally understood the simple truth that, once received, government revenues were fungible—transferable from one objective to the next—and that aid bequests would become all the more fungible when meant to be applied to an operating budget.

There was a final notable aspect of the legislation of 1973: the explicit purpose of development-assistance programs was rewritten in a seemingly slight but nonetheless significant way. Provision 102(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1967 had read: "Development is primarily the responsibility of the people of the less developed countries themselves." In the 1973 legislation, the equivalent passage read, "Development planning must be the responsibility of each sovereign nation." With this semantic change, America was retreating from the concepts of economic health and self-sustaining growth and implicitly repudiating the notion that international markets and free flows of private capital should serve as the instruments by which people might raise themselves to mass affluence. Instead, we had come to endorse, and seemingly to require of recipients of our aid, adherence to the very system of comprehensive planning which our leaders had decried as inimical to the interests of poor peoples scarcely twenty years earlier.

The "reforms of 1973" (also known as the "New Directions" legislation) may yet be hard fully to evaluate, but it is clear that they have had at

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least one effect. Before Vietnam, the United States could point to a number of self-reliant and prospering economies—Greece, Taiwan, and South Korea among them—which had "graduated" out of American development aid. Since the "reforms of 1973," there have been no new graduates.

IX

THE decoupling of American development assistance from the policies which had previously been regarded as the best means for improving the economic health of poor nations also bespoke a loss of faith in the United States. It was no longer naturally assumed that American interests and preferences, pursued in practical fashion, would benefit the peoples of the world. To serve the weak and helpless of the earth, Americans were now advised to restrain themselves and their impulse to international action. The United States was urged instead to assist with the one thing it had which poor governments manifestly lacked: money.

As American-administered development programs took on the trappings of relief work, and as the terms "development aid" and "reparations" came to be used interchangeably (in 1973 Nixon administration officials had secretly discussed postwar "development aid" proposals with Hanoi), there arose simultaneously a tendency to give aid through international institutions rather than channeling it directly from our government to the beneficiary capital. Through "multilateralization," it was argued, donor "pressure" on recipient governments might be made to diminish, even as aid outlays were made to rise.

The multilateralization of aid was made easier by the impressive growth of the World Bank under Robert McNamara, the former U.S. Secretary of Defense who had left the Defense Department around the time of the Tet offensive to assume the Bank's presidency. As admirers testified at his retirement in 1981, he oversaw a tenfold increase in the Bank's annual commitments. McNamara accomplished this remarkable feat by reinterpreting the Bank's mission, and its operating rules.

The Bank's Articles of Agreement specify that bank funds must be used for "productive investment"; they neglect, however, to qualify the sorts of spending which may be *labeled* productive investment. McNamara took command of the definition of the term. A growing body of economic research was detailing the connection among education, productive knowledge, and economic growth; the results suggested that augmenting "human capital" was as integral to economic development as was deepening the base of "physical capital." McNamara used this research to argue that health, nutrition, education, family planning, and other social services were in fact investments, and thus legitimate avenues for the application of Bank funds.

While the prerogative for lending was being expanded, the standards for evaluating loans were simultaneously being relaxed. McNamara outlined the Bank's new view of lending in 1970: "What contributes the most to the development of the borrowing country should be the decisive factor in both Bank and IDA operations. . . . Any policy which can be justified for IDA as consistent with its development function can, I believe, be equally justified for the Bank, and the Bank itself should adopt it." Since IDA was in the business of dispensing "soft" loans—"of doubtful validity," as David Baldwin pointed out nearly twenty years ago, "by any measured banking standard"—a large pool of capital was being declared exempt from the scrutiny which private loans must customarily withstand.

McNamara's efforts to expand the Bank's financial involvement in less developed countries, while relinquishing some of the rights (and obligations) traditionally assumed to be incumbent on portfolio managers, was consistent, in some ways, with his view of the problems facing the poor nations, and the world. Like many of his contemporaries in Congress, McNamara felt that international development efforts had largely failed the poor. As he told the delegates of UNCTAD III in Santiago, Chile in 1972: "Development programs have been directed largely at gross economic goals, and have failed to insure that all nations, and all groups within nations, have shared equitably in economic advance." The Bank's new "basic human needs" (or "social investment") programs were informed by that opinion.

McNamara had decided that an ongoing "global transfer" of public funds would be necessary to meet the problem of world poverty. In his words, "the rich countries have a responsibility to assist the less developed nations. It is not a sentimental question of philanthropy. It is a straightforward issue of social justice." The idea of unconditional concessionary transfers from Western people to low-income governments was echoed and amplified by a number of officials who rose to prominence in the Bank during the McNamara years; they gave form to McNamara's more vaguely stated notion through their support of "global negotiations" for the expanded and unrestricted transfer of money from the governments of the "North" to the governments of the "South."

Like many other large institutions, the World Bank has never spoken with a single voice or acted as if by a single hand. Nevertheless, the change in direction during the McNamara years was unmistakable: the felt obligation to provide money to poor nations was growing; the right to monitor its disbursement was more and more open to question. The World Bank had come a long way from the Bretton Woods conference, when Secretary Morgenthau introduced it to the world with these words: "The chief purpose of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development is to

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guarantee private loans through normal investment channels."

Some observers have seen in McNamara's initiatives at the World Bank a sort of expiation for presumed pangs of conscience over his prosecution of the war in Vietnam as Secretary of Defense. A less sentimental and more straightforward interpretation might be that the McNamara initiatives simply formalized, and globalized, the new development policies that the United States had experimented with in Vietnam. In any event, the two were characterized by the same effort at divorcing the living standards of national populations from the productive base which would ordinarily be expected to sustain them.

X

THE multilateral institution which most effectively divorced development funding from the "pressures" of donors, however, was not the World Bank but the United Nations. The story of what happened in, and to, the United Nations over the past two decades is by now a familiar tale. During the 1960's, a voting bloc began to form which defined itself by opposition to American policies in Vietnam. It soon became clear that this bloc was opposed not simply to America's war in Vietnam but to American purposes in the world generally, and to the very idea that America should be a country wielding international power. A psychological barrier was crossed in 1970, when this bloc—self-described as "non-aligned"—succeeded in outvoting the U.S. and its allies on an Albanian resolution to recognize Beijing rather than Taipei as the legitimate seat of Chinese government. Thereafter the bloc grew, both in numbers and boldness, until it became the decisive force in framing UN policy.

The apparatus of development organizations which had been erected beneath the UN flag was inevitably influenced by the new thinking in the General Assembly. It had often been said that the International Labor Organization (ILO), the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the host of other UN agencies became "politicized" in the 1970's; it would be more accurate, however, to say that they simply became suffused with a *new* political ethos—one which, as it happened, was hostile to the meanings of the UN Charter, to the previous purposes of the organization, and to the principles of the Western peoples who provided most of the UN's monies.

The UN's new agenda followed largely from the same line of thought that led to the accusation —enunciated by President Salvador Allende of Chile before the same UNCTAD audience where McNamara professed the failure of Western-sponsored development efforts—that the industrial nations had created a world where "the toil and resources of the poorer nations pay for the prosperity of the affluent peoples." In logical fashion, and in strikingly consistent measure, the new development initiatives emanating from the UN were aimed at disassembling the liberal international economic order and in augmenting instead the capacity of states and the authority of their leaders to plan their local economies and to direct their people's societies—and to pay for these therapies with renewed "global transfers" of tax revenues from the Western nations which had supposedly made the cures necessary in the first place.

Although there was little intellectual or (in the strict sense of the word) economic merit in most of the new thoughts circulating through the UN during the 1970's, it must be remembered that Western nations put very little pressure on advocates of the New International Economic Order to think more clearly or act more decently. The acquiescence of the United States was especially striking. For seven years—from 1970 to 1977—America made virtually no concerted effort to come to the defense of either its national interests or its principles in any of the UN's many forums. (The attempts of Daniel P. Moynihan, in his brief eight-month tenure as Ambassador, to force a government response to the anti-American invective by then commonplace at the UN, stood in contrast to the accepted policy of the day but did not alter it.)

America did not lack a foreign policy during the early 1970's. On the contrary, from 1970 to 1977 American foreign policy was more fully controlled, and more intricately directed, than it had ever been before, or has been since. Though Secretary of State Henry Kissinger privately—and occasionally publicly—disagreed with the UN's new development thrusts, he seemed to have felt that they were best parried through accommodation. His major speech on development issues, an address to the General Assembly in 1975, highlighted his general attitude. In the course of his exposition he made many references to the need to strengthen free and competitive international markets, but he also proposed a new concessionary window at the International Monetary Fund from which only Third World nations might draw loans and which would allow for the conversion of these IMF loans into "grants under prescribed conditions." Such plans could only diminish considerably the IMF's ability to lobby credibly for economic responsibility with those nations which applied to it for loans; they were also bound to stimulate international inflation at a time when global inflation was already punishing rich countries and poor alike.

Kissinger also proposed new "bilateral support for training and technical assistance to help developing countries find and exploit new sources of fossil fuel"—a striking suggestion from a U.S. Secretary of State, considering that the greatest technical capacities for oil exploration and develop-

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ment resided in the American energy companies then being nationalized throughout the Third World. He further recommended—less than two years after the politicization of oil prices by the OPEC cartel—that "a producer-consumer forum be established for every big commodity," the inevitable result of which would be to sanction the setting of commodity prices by political contrivance rather than economic demand.

For the poor nations, in the meantime, there were no special offers to aid them in learning the ways of the world's markets; there was, however, plenty of help should they experience the usual side-effects of "development planning": a guaranteed disbursement of 10 million tons of food aid a year; a new IMF facility for "emergency" balance-of-payments problems; and "population assistance" to "help curb demographic growth" and thereby, presumably, take pressure off the economic structure to produce efficiently.

In the United Nations, as in so many other arenas, Kissinger presumably hoped to throw his opponents off guard by agreeing to their demands in principle, and then to win the day by rear-guard negotiating tactics. This ploy, however, is considerably less effective when the issue at stake is the principles themselves.

XI

THE period of drift and decline in American policies toward the world's poor continued under President Jimmy Carter. Elected in 1976 on a campaign promise to restore moral purpose to American politics, Carter seemed to find it extremely difficult in practice to determine whether any use at all of American power overseas was in fact moral. The administration's sensitivity to criticism on this score, and its ambivalence about American purpose, were highlighted in its foreign-aid policies.

The administration enthusiastically embraced the 1973 "reforms," with their seeming evidence that America was interested in directly aiding the world's poor. It created the International Development Cooperation Agency (IDCA)—an umbrella organization above USAID—to remove development-assistance programs from the direct chain of command within the State Department, and thus to shield the United States from charges that it was using foreign aid to further America's purposes of state. It agreed to a continuing cutback in military and security assistance, since (it was argued) these monies might be used for questionable or even inhumane purposes by our chosen allies.

The Carter administration also commissioned two major studies of world poverty. The first, the Presidential Commission on World Hunger, warned of "the continuing deterioration of the world food situation." It stated that "corporations sometimes badly undercut efforts to alleviate hunger and malnutrition," and equivocated about the extent to which international trade might help reduce hunger. Rather, the report explained, "redirecting income from the rich to the poor" would be a principal vehicle for reducing hunger in poor nations, and foreign aid could figure importantly in this process. Among the recommendations of the commission were a "total" debt forgiveness for the "poorest" developing countries; an easing of IMF lending conditions; an immediate doubling of U.S. development outlays; an increase in "Food For Peace" authorizations and a relaxation of the conditions for disbursing such produce; the promotion of a United Nations code to regulate international businesses operating in less developed countries; and the establishment of a public organization in the United States to lobby for these goals.

The second study, the "Global 2000" report, warned of an impending and generalized series of environmental problems born of overly rapid population growth in the less developed countries and excessive economic growth in the affluent nations. One implication of this computer-model study was that the sort of sustained economic advancement which would be necessary to draw the world's poor countries out of mass poverty might seriously destabilize the fragile global eco-system, possibly causing ruin for all. By seeming to question the feasibility of continuing economic growth, "Global 2000" led some observers to conclude that the only viable way to assist poor nations was through the transfer of existing wealth from the Western states.

Without fully realizing it, the Carter administration had thus ended up accepting as counsel in dealing with the less developed countries many of the basic tenets of the United Nation's proposed New International Economic Order. What did not seem to be entirely understood was that the New International Economic Order was a call for the liquidation of the liberal international economic order which America had helped to create, and continued to lead.

XII

RONALD REAGAN's decisive victory over President Carter in 1980 seemed to presage more than just a shift in attitudes toward the use of American power on the international scene. The Reagan administration came into office with an articulated, and internally consistent, vision of America's political and economic role in the world. This vision had implications not only for the international political struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union, but also for American policies toward the world economy and toward development.

President Reagan's critics were quick to brand him a reactionary; there was some accuracy in this characterization, albeit inadvertent. More than

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any President in a generation, Ronald Reagan explicitly embraced the precepts which had guided the foreign economic policies of Presidents Roosevelt and Truman. He emphasized this return to earlier principles in a major speech on international economic development in Philadelphia in October 1981.

"Economic health" was the theme underlying the President's prescriptions for promoting international advancement. There was, he said, a "need to revitalize the U.S. and the world economy as a basis for the social and economic progress of our own and other nations." At the same time, there was "a need for a clearer focus on the real meaning of development and our development record." "The postwar economic system," he asserted, "was created on the belief that the key to national development and human progress is individual freedom—both political and economic."

President Reagan identified five principles by which development might be encouraged:

> First, stimulating international trade by opening up markets, both within and between countries; . . .
>
> Second, tailoring particular development strategies to the specific needs and potential of individual countries. . . .
>
> Third, guiding assistance toward the development of self-sustaining productive capacities. . . .
>
> Fourth, improving in many countries the climate for private investment. . . .
>
> Fifth, creating a political atmosphere in which practical solutions can be moved forward—rather than founder on a reef of misguided policies that restrain and interfere with the international marketplace or foster inflation.

Development assistance, in the President's vision, was to be put to the service of these principles. He promised to "work to strengthen the World Bank and other international institutions," and pledged to make available American technical know-how, food, and money "toward the development of self-sustaining productive activities" in poor nations. The President's words suggested that a dramatic change—or more properly, a historic restoration—of American policies was under way.

The Reagan's administration's actions, however, suggested something quite different. Instead of bringing America's foreign-aid policies back into alignment with the goals and ideals that had originally animated them under Roosevelt and Truman, the Reagan administration allowed American programs to continue down the path which had been charted in the 1970's. So smooth, in fact, was the trajectory that it would be difficult to tell which administration was in power from the statements and actions of its development apparatus. No less than during the Carter years, American development programs under Reagan seemed to be at systematic variance with the objectives of the international order we nominally supported. The administrators of these programs, moreover, appeared increasingly intent upon concealing the discrepancy from the American public.

XIII

THE principal spokesman for the Reagan administration's development programs has been its acting director of IDCA and administrator of AID, M. Peter McPherson. Mr. McPherson made clear his perspective in his first presentation before the House Foreign Affairs Committee in 1981. "We have learned," he said, "that continued progress in Third World development is of growing importance to our own domestic and international well-being. In the past year, public awareness of our interdependence has been highlighted by the Presidential Commission on World Hunger, the Brandt Commission [a panel of inquiry, created by Robert McNamara and headed by former Chancellor Willy Brandt of West Germany, that advocated "massive" and "automatic" transfers of revenue from Western governments to "Southern" states] and the 'Global 2000' study." Embracing the findings of these reports, he instructed the congressional committee on their significance: "Failure to make acceptable progress in ameliorating conditions of poverty can only lead to domestic instability and increasing frustration on the part of Third World governments over the workings of the international system and the distribution of economic and institutional power in that system as it is now constituted." To observers of the North-South "dialogue," the device of wrapping a request for aid in a veiled threat may have been familiar, but in the deliberations between appointed representatives of the executive branch and elected representatives of the American people this procedure was something quite new. It had not been seen under President Carter.

To move American development programs back to the stimulation of "self-sustaining productive capacities," as the President had pledged, it would have been necessary to challenge the "New Directions" legislation of the 1970's. AID made no effort to do so. Two years into his appointment, and again before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, McPherson may have suggested why. Reflecting on the early 1970's, he remarked:

> The political, social, and economic structure which had evolved in many less developed countries had produced little improvement in economic well-being for the poor of those countries. To help correct this situation, a new concern with the effects of our assistance on the poor majority emerged a decade ago, in the form of the current New Directions legislation [of 1973].

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This was an implicit endorsement, not only of the legislation but of the analysis which had prompted it. That analysis, of course, held that the postwar order America had created could not be relied upon to advance the interests of the world's poor.

In 1983, in an aid request, McPherson told Congress that "trade and debt pressure is particularly serious for stability and longer-run economic progress in the low-income countries. . . . Our foreign-assistance program can play an important role in their recovery." It was a revealing analysis. The problems to which he referred were both financial (relating to balance-of-payments shortfalls) and short-term (being exacerbated by a presumably cyclical drop in international economic activity). But development programs, as generally imagined, involve technical transfers and long-term horizons. A "development program" could play an important role in a short-term economic recovery only if it were intended to infuse monies directly into a pool of current spending.

AID's presentations left little doubt about the Agency's view of the propriety of direct budgetary transfers. An AID policy paper on health assistance, for example, noted that "by 1982, one half of the Agency's development assistance budget for health supported the delivery of basic health services in LDCs." Such "development-assistance" is, necessarily, a direct bequest from the U.S. Treasury, applied to the operating revenues of recipient states. Whatever may be said of such charitable donations, they are in no sense "self-sustaining."

Confusion over the distinction between recurrent expense and productive investment likewise marked AID's agricultural program. The agency's Fiscal Year 1983 presentation to Congress proposed to increase agricultural productivity in the less developed countries through the following activities:

> supporting land tenure arrangements and agrarian reform policies; encouraging small farmer organizations and local participation; disseminating and developing new technologies; protecting the environmental and natural resource base through better land management; halting and reversing deforestation by developing renewable energy alternatives to firewood, testing fast-growing tree species, and supporting woodlots for fuel; increasing the availability of water, improved seed, credit, and other agricultural inputs at reasonable prices; reducing post-harvest food losses; and facilitating small-farmer access to markets.

In this conspectus of agricultural productivity, only one item seemed to be missing: any mention of the prices paid to producers. Yet it is prices, unfortunately, which often prove decisive in the success or failure of agricultural development, determining as they do the returns which may be derived from increasing production or adopting innovations.

The President had suggested that misguided policies played an important role in perpetuating poverty in the less developed regions; his AID administrator expressed a very different view. In 1983, McPherson told Congress that "the critical problem of excessive population growth in the Third World . . . constitutes the primary obstacle to increasing per-capita food production, reducing malnutrition and chronic disease, and conserving dwindling non-renewable resources." This formulation, with its implication that parents in less developed nations irrationally choose "excessive" numbers of children, could be understood as excusing governments in those nations from responsibility for agricultural difficulties, hunger problems, or the management of natural resources. It also appeared to lend legitimacy to governmental efforts to control population growth.

AID had maintained that it would only condone voluntary family planning. But even as a position paper to this effect was being circulated publicly, the agency was participating in a $50-million grant to China from the UN Fund for Population Activities. China was pursuing a population campaign known as the "one child norm," requiring parents to agree to have only a single offspring. The campaign appears to have been horribly unpopular with the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people, and the Chinese government found it necessary to use pressure, threats, and far-reaching punishments against married couples to enforce the decree. (Many infant girls and ablebodied women are thought to have died as a result of this program.) Since most of the funding in which AID participated was earmarked for Chinese "population education activities" and for health clinics (at which quotas of sterilizations and abortions were being fulfilled in accordance with the population plan), it would have required extreme mental agility to dissociate the Reagan administration's development money from the practice of involuntary population control.

Still another area in which AID seemed to disagree with received American policy was on the issue of private enterprise. AID is committed by law to refrain from using its funds to displace private investment or private commercial activity. Despite this, AID's 1983 budget presentation before Congress stated that, since energy "has become a field of major concern to AID," the agency had "increasingly broadened its assistance to encompass technical assistance to expand indigenous supplies of coal, oil, and gas. . . ." The projects involved were not described, but it would seem difficult to reconcile these activities with AID's legal mandate.

The question of private enterprise, and its legitimate scope within development, seems to have troubled AID administrators deeply during the Reagan years. One attempt to resolve the issue was the creation of a Bureau of Private Enterprise. In a sense, however, this only compounded

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the problem: for the first time in its history, AID was formally and explicitly separating the job of encouraging private commerce from its overall responsibilities in promoting "development." Moreover, the private-enterprise initiative did not have enthusiastic AID backing. In its heyday it was allocated $27 million; since then, its funding has declined. Although no other program receives such extensive coverage in AID's annual budget presentation before Congress, the private-enterprise initiative now accounts for something less than one-half of one percent of AID's expenditures.

Recently, it is true, AID statements and publications have begun to express formal support for the liberal international economic order. But if the tone has changed, AID's priorities have not. In 1984, a top-level internal document on strategy and objectives for a second Reagan term proposed that AID's mission be redefined to include the following goals: the raising of life expectancy in all developing countries to over 60 years; the reduction of infant-mortality rates in all developing countries to 75 per thousand, or below; and the increase to 70 percent of literacy rates in all developing countries. As the draft noted, this change in mandate would require a "renewal" in America's commitment to development funding; indeed, to follow through on such a program in a world where recipient governments maintain sovereign authority over their economic and social policies, this renewed commitment would have to be not only major but virtually open-ended.

This internal AID document contained a number of formal concessions to the notions of "self-sustaining growth" and "policy reform." Yet as it was outlined, AID's plan for promoting development would not emphasize policies to create self-sustaining growth or to encourage conditions by which living standards might undergo an internally generated transformation; it would, rather, concentrate on the direct and restitutive redress of poverty through social spending. If the rhetoric of the Carter commissions and the Brandt commission had been carefully airbrushed out of AID's public statements in the 1984 election year, such thinking was still clearly acceptable in the inner recesses of the Reagan administration's development apparatus.

XIV

IT MAY be useful to conclude with a look at the effect of recent American foreign-aid policies on a single nation: El Salvador.

To be sure, even by the variegated standards of the developing nations, El Salvador's problems are not "typical." Among other things, the country is caught in a bloody war between government forces and Communist-supported troops, a war which has resulted in both severe destruction and massive emigration from this little land. But it is precisely the exceptional quality of El Salvador's circumstances as a small country which needs American help badly, is receptive to American advice, and is the object of a major strategic and financial commitment, that makes it an illuminating case for the study of American foreign-aid efforts in general.

El Salvador is, first and foremost, a country at war. Economic development is unlikely to proceed there unless civil order is restored, so that a climate free of undue physical risk to investment and commerce may assert itself. Such problems would seem to be best addressed by "security assistance." The Reagan administration, however, has been extremely cautious in extending military aid to El Salvador, preferring to restrict it to a plausible minimum while increasing quite freely the funding for "development assistance" and "economic support." As late as 1983, two years into the Reagan administration's escalated commitment to El Salvador, the ratio of "development" to military aid for that nation was on the order of 3:1—this, at a time when American military advisers in El Salvador were explicitly asserting that the security-assistance bequests were inadequate for the tasks at hand.

That is a highly problematic approach. In the midst of war, investments in infrastructure or American-sponsored local projects are unlikely to promise high rates of return, especially since the projects themselves may well become targets for destruction or disruption by guerrilla forces. By the same token, "economic support" to cover balance-of-payments problems would seem ill-suited to the difficulties stemming from such symptoms of wartime deterioration as capital flight and the destruction of export industries.

Constraining military aid during a state of war —providing some, but not enough to win—can only be considered a false economy. Providing economic aid *instead of* military aid in wartime makes still less sense. Such bequests may cushion the decline in living standards that fighting, disruption, and uncertainty inevitably bring, but they are unlikely either to bring fighting to an end or to restore the political stability upon which self-sustaining growth must ultimately rest.

American economic aid to El Salvador has necessarily addressed the problem of feeding and providing for refugees, as it did in Vietnam. Under emergency conditions such bequests serve both political and humanitarian ends, though they make little contribution to "development" as such. But AID was also involved in programs to bring long-term economic change to El Salvador, foremost among them land reform.

After the coup against the old oligarchy in 1979, El Salvador's new junta determined upon a major redistribution of the nation's heretofore highly concentrated land holdings. This program

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was to be a sort of "land to the tiller" reform. The large plantations would be broken into small parcels, to be owned by the *hacienderos* who had worked them; in smaller estates ownership would eventually devolve on those who had farmed the fields. In this way, it was thought, El Salvador's farmers might be converted from landless tenants and day-laborers into a class of landowners—possibly even into a middle class.

AID involved itself in these reforms at the Salvadoran government's request under President Carter, and seemed to take an even more prominent role under the Reagan administration. The plan for "Phase III" of El Salvador's land reform (which was to give title to some 60,000 families from the smaller estates) was drawn up by American consultants, and paid for by the Reagan administration. True, legislation sponsored by Senator Jesse Helms prevented the administration from paying directly for El Salvador's land reform by prohibiting the use of aid monies for compensation of confiscated agricultural or banking enterprises. In practice, however, such strictures had little effect on the land-reform program, given the realities of fungibility at a time when American aid was rapidly increasing.

To Americans, the phrase "land reform" often evokes images from our own agrarian past. But the policies America supported and promoted in El Salvador bore little correspondence to the Homestead Act. El Salvador's first step to land reform was the creation of the Salvadoran Institute for Agrarian Transformation. This institute expropriated the nation's large plantations, compensating former owners with government bonds which could not be redeemed until the end of the century, and then only at their nominal face value, unadjusted for intervening inflation. The deeds from these estates, moreover, were not turned over to individual peasants or their families; instead, the land was deeded directly to newly formed "cooperatives," certified by the Institute. With no title of their own, peasants could not sell their holdings, or transfer their interest to a different cooperative. Voluntary association was thus impossible; a peasant's only options under the new system were to remain with his cooperative or to move and forfeit everything.

With no title of his own, the new "landowner" could also not raise credit against his holdings. Credit was only to be raised by the cooperative's management committee, and was to be allocated as the management committee determined. A peasant's chances of receiving credit thus depended largely on his role in fulfilling the plan which the management committee drew up. Since each committee had a representative of the government on its board, and since credit was now allocated to the cooperative by the central government, the new arrangements made *hacienderos* more sensitive to agricultural directives from the capital than they had ever been in the past.

The title program for the smaller estates, the so-called Phase III of land reform, was also managed by the Salvadoran Institute for Agrarian Transformation. As with the hacienda reforms, title to land did not devolve clearly and directly to the peasants. Once arrangements were settled (and this itself often proved a long and difficult matter) peasants would obtain an eventual title to their parcel—so long as the head of the household continued to live and farm on it for the next thirty years. In the meantime they would not be able to raise credit from it through secondary mortgages; if the head of the household were to move or die in the intervening thirty years, "his" land would go not to his family but back to the Institute.

The perverse effects of the new land reforms were soon apparent. On cooperatives, peasants petitioned for the right to grow vegetables in "private plots," and to rent the land they nominally owned so that they might farm it according to their own practices rather than the directives of the management committee. On the smaller holdings, peasants were in effect frozen to their land. Both land reforms had forgotten to take into account the fact that El Salvador was a society with an active rural labor market, in which peasants had moved through their small nation in pursuit of seasonal employment. The new arrangements and their attendant uncertainties virtually precluded "landowners" from pursuing what had previously been an important source of family income. The new arrangements also tended to restrict the healthy growth of towns and rural industries, whose markets and products had typically proved important in countries which had undergone successful rural development.

One perverse effect led to another. The new land policies could not be enforced or financed without controlling the availability of credit. The Salvadoran government thus found it necessary early on to nationalize the country's private banks. Since the private banks were, by one estimate, custodians of some 40 percent of the nation's credit portfolio, the government also nationalized much of the nation's industry in the process. AID did not protest.

When El Salvador's Central Reserve Bank was established in the 1930's, David Raynolds has noted, "the basic law regulating its functions carefully provided that the national government could not hold stock in the bank, since it was feared that otherwise the credit function would become subject to political manipulation." Under the new arrangement, all formal credit was controlled by the government. Interest rates were set considerably below the rate of inflation. This made loans a gift; not surprisingly, loans were increasingly dispensed in the way that gifts tend to be. The Reagan administration did not object to this. Questioned before Congress on the administra-

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tion's support of an IMF loan to El Salvador in 1982, Richard Erb, U.S. representative to the IMF, argued that "it was not an absolute [IMF] requirement to have a positive interest rate." Legally, he was correct; yet it is difficult to overlook the consequences of such a posture, either for the Salvadoran economy or on the bargaining positions of the many poorer nations that were to attempt to negotiate IMF loans in the early and mid-1980's.

Each control required another. To check inflation, price controls were enforced; to compensate for the loss in international competition, foreign-exchange controls were imposed; to make up for the loss in governmental export revenues, mechanisms were created to purchase cash crops at unusually low prices from the "cooperatives." All these controls had the inevitable effect of eroding business confidence; domestic capital continued its flight abroad; the economy listed further into decline.

A strange new form of poverty seemed to be settling over El Salvador, not entirely related to the destruction of war. The destruction now becoming evident was one underwritten by government policies. These policies were not only supported by Washington; in some cases they were recommended by Washington. And in all cases, ultimately, they were funded by Washington.

XV

THE record of the last decades shows, in sum, that America's foreign-aid policies are in trouble—not because the American people lack compassion for the suffering of others overseas, and not because Americans are unwilling to devote their nation's resources to helping other peoples, but because the policies themselves are formulated and implemented in such a way as to suggest that the United States no longer understands the nature of the problems facing poor people and poor countries. Far from contributing to the goal of self-sustained economic progress in the low-income regions, our funds are instead being directed to a tragic extent into the construction of barriers against such progress and in some cases may actually be paying for the creation of poverty, albeit in new and pernicious variants. This state of affairs can continue only at great human cost to those whom we mean to help—and at great moral cost to our nation.

The cost, indeed, may be more consequential than is commonly appreciated by cool-headed advocates of a "pragmatic" American foreign policy. The experience of the United States in the world arena since the end of World War I suggests that, for our nation more than any other, power and principle are inseparable. When the legitimacy and moral purpose of American initiatives overseas have been commonly understood and accepted, our government has proved able to mobilize awesome resources in the pursuit of its objectives. When, by contrast, the legitimacy and moral purpose of American efforts have become open to question, the domestic base of support has dramatically diminished, and with it the possibility of pursuing those efforts with any hope of success.

The premises of the liberal international economic order the United States labored to create from the wreckage of World War II remain valid, and the instruments of this order remain capable of creating extraordinary opportunities for general material advance throughout all regions of the world. The failures of American aid policies in recent decades are a reflection not on the soundness of the conceptions that originally brought these policies to life but rather on the degree to which current practice has become divorced from original purpose. America's foreign-aid policies today stand in contradistinction to the thrust and purpose of America's overall foreign policy, and to the values and ideals of the American people. How we deal with this contradiction will affect not only the poor and the unprotected of the earth, whose champions we should rightly be, but our own conception of ourselves and our ability to function in the world of nations.

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Orthodox Jews—From Passivity to Activism

Jacob Katz

HISTORICALLY, Orthodoxy in Judaism is a product of the late 18th century, when Jewish society, on the threshold of modernity, underwent a loosening of the bonds of tradition. But actually the term "orthodox" as applied to Jews is a misnomer, since it derives from Christian usage, referring to those who cling to the official tenets and dogmas of their respective churches. In the case of Judaism, "orthoprax" would be a more accurate designation since it is correct observance, rather than belief, which in Judaism is always a surer sign of conformity. In any event, historically the Orthodox were defined first and foremost by the degree of their observance of traditional ways of life, especially insofar as these were of religious significance and grounded in Jewish religious law (*halakhah*).

Those who practiced Judaism in this way, as opposed to those who relinquished traditional customs to some extent, or at least ceased to view them as obligatory, were in the majority for quite some time—in Germany until the mid-19th century, and in Eastern Europe up until World War I. But it would be incorrect to view the behavior of these modern adherents of tradition as simply reproducing that of earlier generations. For those earlier generations, the tradition had been a self-evident and unquestioned guide to both religious observance and religious thought. By contrast, those who continued to adhere to tradition when its observance ceased to be the universal characteristic of Jewish society were at once more self-aware and less self-confident. Their loyalty to tradition was the result of a conscious decision, a stance assumed in *defiance* of the style of life adopted by other Jews. This self-awareness was an essential and universal characteristic of all forms and variations of Orthodoxy.

Of course neither the traditionalists themselves nor their contemporaries viewed Orthodoxy as a new form of Judaism. Both sides saw the traditionalists as simply adhering to the old ways of thinking and acting, with the so-called progressives accusing the Orthodox of being blind to new realities and the Orthodox themselves regarding this very "blindness" as a virtue. This consensus was shared even by scholarly observers, including historians of modern Jewry who portrayed the Orthodox merely as a remnant of the pre-modern period, a convenient foil against which to measure such dynamic social movements as the Enlightenment, Reform, Socialism, and Zionism. Yet this consensus is in error. Pre-modern Judaism—which might be called "tradition-bound"—is not to be equated with modern, "traditionalist" Judaism, nor are the Orthodox simply the guardians of the pure Judaism of old.

Thus, for example, Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888), the German opponent of Reform and champion of "neo-Orthodoxy," regarded his conception of Judaism as different from the merely "traditional" practices of preceding generations. And indeed the difference would have been obvious to any outside observer. The adherents of neo-Orthodoxy abandoned special Jewish dress, speech, and mannerisms, held to a strict standard of decorum during religious worship, and so forth. In addition, Hirsch rejected both the mystical and the rational-philosophical vindications of Judaism put forward by previous generations of rabbis and preachers in what he viewed as a haphazard homiletical manner. In their stead he proposed a systematic symbolic interpretation of the minutiae of halakhic injunctions.

Whatever the theological validity of this program, it proved its contemporary value in providing inspiration to Hirsch's followers. Convinced of the inner significance of every detail of the Law, they observed it scrupulously while at the same time remaining open to the influence of the non-Jewish environment to which they belonged, at least formally, by virtue of their civic emancipation. In contrast to the majority of German Jews, who were either becoming de-Judaized altogether or else following the path of Reform or some other compromise, neo-Orthodoxy was characterized by consistent religious observance.

In Russia the situation was entirely different. There, despite slow but steady growth since the 1830's, the Enlightenment movement remained marginal to Jewish society and made few inroads into the traditional attitudes of the majority. The impulse to religious reform appeared only in em-

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bryonic form. Although the government clearly wished to acculturate the Jews within the Russian majority, and to that extent supported the Enlightenment movement, it stopped short of adopting the pattern of West European governments, namely, pairing political emancipation with modern education. The government did found some schools and rabbinical seminaries, but, with few clear social or economic benefits to confer, these schools failed to attract the majority of the Jewish population; most Russian Jews continued to turn to the traditional institutions of learning, the *heder* and the *yeshiva*. In those areas where Hasidism prevailed, traditionalism was especially strong, with the community formed around the *rebbe* also serving as a strong, not to say totally impermeable, wall against modernity. In Russia as elsewhere in Eastern Europe religious leaders deplored the loss of absolute unity among Jews, but they were confident of retaining the allegiance of the majority simply by opposing the modernizing efforts of the *maskilim* (Enlighteners) and the government.

It took the perspicacity of Israel Salanter (Lipkin) (1810-1883), founder of the Musar movement, to sense that the era of self-evident and unreflecting adherence to the traditional way of life was over, and that only a conscious act of self-education would enable modern Jews to internalize traditional values. Rejecting the merely mechanical observance of religious precepts, he prescribed a method of study which would cultivate both the intellect and the spirit. In this general approach Salanter was following in the footsteps of earlier moralists, but he also introduced one significant innovation: the proposal that each individual set aside a certain hour for secluded and silent meditation, as a means of clarifying what his further self-education required. He even urged special quarters to be set aside for such contemplation.

This novel idea met with the predictable opposition of most traditionalist leaders, and the Musar movement remained the preserve of a specific circle of followers and pupils at certain *yeshivot*. These *yeshivot* then became a stronghold of Orthodoxy in the modern sense. For at the heart of Salanter's system was a recognition of the potential loss of Jewish youth to secular society. This is what links him to Samson Raphael Hirsch. Even if the two were worlds apart in their respective approaches to non-Jewish culture, both men sought to bind the individual Jew to his faith by building up his sense of commitment.

YET A third set of socio-political factors determined the nature of Orthodoxy as it emerged in Hungary. There, because of cultural ties to neighboring German-speaking countries and political affiliation with Austria, the Jewish population was directly exposed to the influence of modernizing tendencies within German Jewry. Many of the Jewish communities in Hungary had been founded not long before by emigrants from the countryside or from Bohemia-Moravia, and they did not oppose the educational reforms which had been part of the Enlightenment program since the reign of Joseph II (1780-1790). In some places, religious reform also had made certain inroads, as in the case of the Arad community under the leadership of Aaron Chorin (1766-1844). But Hungary had its traditionalists also. Conspicuous among these was Rabbi Moses Sofer (1762-1839), known as the Hatam Sofer. A native of Frankfurt, he had lived in Moravia since his youth, serving as rabbi first in a number of smaller Hungarian communities and then, from 1806 on, in Hungary's leading Jewish community of Pressburg (Bratislava).

Mindful of the way traditional Judaism had deteriorated in cities like Frankfurt, and concerned lest the same thing happen in his chosen community, Sofer evolved an intellectual and institutional strategy to safeguard tradition. He not only rejected all innovation, but invoked religious authority to sanction his conservatism, coining the slogan: "Anything new is forbidden by [biblical] Law." Thus did it come about that such customs as the use of Yiddish in teaching and preaching were elevated to the status of dogma. A master of dialectics, Sofer contended very persuasively that his interpretations were rooted in halakhic principles. The integrity of the Jewish community, he declared, depended upon the strict adherence of its members to traditionalist ways of life, and those who deviated automatically forfeited the right to be called Jews. Although this principle of exclusivity would not achieve its full effect for some time, Sofer was able to put it into operation at his own *yeshiva*, where only those prepared to follow the strict rulings of the master were tolerated. Under his guidance, the Pressburg *yeshiva* became a fountainhead of the militant Orthodox leadership of the next generation in Hungary.

In the decades following Sofer's death, the clash between traditionalists and innovators in Hungary gained in intensity. In an expanding economy and in the wake of progressive policies granting the Jews greater liberties—after 1840, for example, Hungarian Jews were generally free to choose their place of residence—religious practices that seemed like obstacles in the way of economic advantage or social ambition were increasingly discarded. Secular education, mandated by the government, also became generally acceptable in Jewish society. Many communities introduced changes in public worship, thus demonstrating their unwillingness to let tradition be their only guide. In Hungary as in Germany, accommodation to current tastes and conformity with non-Jewish practice spurred Reform activity. From the traditionalists' point of view, all of this constituted a deviation from the Law, irrespective of the halakhic standing of the innovations in question.

The conflict reached countrywide proportions when the government proposed the establishment of a modern rabbinical seminary. The reformers agreed but the Orthodox—wishing to maintain

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the exclusivity of the *yeshivot*, where talmudic studies were the sole curriculum—did not. The ensuing test of strength reached a climax in 1869, when the government, granting full emancipation to Hungarian Jews, called on them to form a national body along the lines followed by other recognized denominations. At the assembly of representatives convened to form such a body, the traditionalist minority declared that their religious convictions would not permit them to join with the majority, who—by deviating from the norm—had introduced a veritable schism into Judaism. They thereupon seceded from the assembly.

In general, the government and the more liberal sectors of public opinion were on the side of the progressive majority, but Hungarian society also harbored important conservative elements among the aristocracy and the clergy. Relying on these for support, the Orthodox secured for themselves the right to their own independent organization, to be made up of traditional communities or factions which had broken away from the reformers. This is the first instance in European Jewish history of an officially recognized Orthodox subgroup. A decade later, Samson Raphael Hirsch secured a similar concession from the Prussian government for his Frankfurt neo-Orthodox community, and others followed his example.

Organizational affiliation thus became an important basis of modern Orthodoxy, though not the only one. In countries where separate communities were not permitted, such as Austria, conviction and conduct determined who was Orthodox. Yet organizational unity did not necessarily guarantee uniformity of thought and conduct. In Hungary, for example, the Orthodox differed among themselves, especially on the issue of cultural dissociation from the non-Jewish environment. Thus, even prior to the community split, a group of rabbis from the northeastern districts of the country (admittedly, not of the first-rank leadership) held a conference reiterating that all languages except Yiddish were to be forbidden in teaching and preaching; that the *heder* was to be preserved as the exclusive educational vehicle for Jewish children; and, of course, that no alterations were to be permitted in synagogue services. At the same time, however, Azriel Hildesheimer (1820-1899), the future founder of the Orthodox rabbinical seminary in Berlin, was directing a *yeshiva* in Eisenstadt on the western border of Hungary, where courses in foreign languages and other secular subjects were taught alongside the Talmud and Codes.

Once Orthodox separatism became a fact in Hungary, the traditionalists developed a *modus vivendi* which entailed sending their children to modern elementary schools while preserving an exclusively Jewish traditional curriculum on the secondary level, particularly in the old-type *yeshivot* where future rabbis were trained. The more radical traditionalists, however, rejected even this as a form of compromise, and some took refuge either among the Hasidim of Galicia or in the still unsecularized environment of Palestine. There, the Jewish population, with the aid of world Jewry, kept a sort of religious reservation that maintained all the characteristics of a pre-modern community.

THOUGH differing from country to country, Jewish Orthodoxy in its various settings retained one common denominator, inherited from pre-modern Jewry: a pervasive passivity when it came to any kind of long-range planning for the future of the Jewish community. Ever since the loss of political independence to Rome in the first century, Jews had lost faith in their ability to extricate themselves from exile on their own. Only through an act of miraculous divine redemption, it was believed, could the Jewish condition ever change. In the interim, it was taken for granted that the Jews would remain dependent upon the governing authorities in the countries in which they lived. Any action taken to alleviate communal problems was therefore limited to intervention with these authorities, and was by its nature of an *ad hoc* character, with only short-term intentions.

With the advent of the modern era it became possible to envision far more decisive modifications of the Jewish situation: emancipation, emigration, and, later, the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth. But Orthodoxy, apparently unable to shed the vestiges of its pre-modern mentality, recoiled from taking an active part, to say nothing of a leading role, in any of these enterprises. Though aware of the advantages entailed in free citizenship, or in other cases of the compelling reasons for emigration, Orthodox leaders would at best tolerate the steps taken by others to achieve these goals. In all cases their inbred passivity was reinforced by the fear that radical changes in the external Jewish situation might have adverse consequences for their traditionalist way of life.

In the case of the national movement aiming at the resettlement of Palestine, the Orthodox found theological justifications for their opposition. Miraculous messianic expectations, as they were popularly conceived, were so closely tied to the return to Palestine that any human endeavor to achieve this end could easily be presented as premature intervention in the divine scheme of things. One Orthodox interpretation did argue that under given circumstances the settlement of Palestine was a necessary first stage in divine redemption, but most authorities rejected this view, and so did the great bulk of their followers. The clash, although it took the form of an ideological controversy, reflected a basic disagreement over the whole issue of modern activism. Two leaders of the activist camp, Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer (1795-1874) and Rabbi Yehuda Alkalay (1798-1878), later became known as forerunners of modern Zionism. Although their efforts in the 1860's and 70's had few practical results, their teaching and per-

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sonal example provided the necessary authority and religious justification for those Orthodox Jews who did join the national movement.

Generally speaking, Orthodoxy managed to hold its own throughout these years, despite the eroding forces of modernity. Up until the mid-20th century, however, its posture was defensive. Everywhere, Orthodox families were confronted with the likelihood that at least some of their children might leave the fold. And if this was a common occurrence in Europe, where Jewish life was still comparatively strong, the likelihood of defections multiplied once mass emigration began. It was almost certain that leaving the home country was tantamount to abandoning the traditional way of life. Only a small proportion of Jewish immigrants in such major centers as New York or London made the effort to retain their Orthodoxy and build their religious institutions accordingly.

The same was true of Palestine. Some of the first settlers in the late 19th century may have intended to maintain traditional practices despite their transition to new lives as farmers and laborers. (Indeed, Baron Rothschild, on whose support these early settlers depended, demanded adherence to certain standards of religious conduct.) Yet the more politically-minded among the new arrivals came to Palestine with the clear idea of founding a society along secular-national lines, a society in which religious elements would be, at best, tolerated. Ultimately, the cleavage between these almost-revolutionary secularists and the separatist wing of Orthodoxy could not be bridged. As the secularists gained strength in the wake of increased immigration in the decade prior to World War I, the conflict broke into the open. The newcomers were decried as desecrators who flouted the Law in its most holy abode, the Land of Israel itself. For their part, the radicals among the Zionist pioneers saw themselves as the vanguard of a national renaissance, and dismissed their opponents as vestiges of a waning past.

Even while rejecting the Jewish tradition in its Orthodox version, however, the secularists were committed to their *own* vision of the Jewish past, which they identified with the biblical era. They were inspired by the conviction that a Jewish society, rebuilt in its ancient land and embracing ideals of social justice and the value of cultural creativity, would somehow reestablish a direct link with this biblical past. Their conviction was reflected in the symbolic vocabulary employed by the secular Zionist movement, obviously and consciously adapted from traditional Jewish messianism. The Orthodox supporters of Zionism, by contrast, paradoxically avoided any reference to the possible messianic significance of the Zionist enterprise, preferring to stress such factors as the need for a secure haven for emigrants and refugees and the religious merit attached to life in the Holy Land.

The one outstanding exception to this reticence was Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865-1935), who had served the community of Jaffa and the new settlements since 1904, and was later to become Chief Rabbi of Palestine. Following in the path of Kalischer and Alkalay, Kook perceived messianic significance in the work of resettlement. To this he added a mystical-kabbalist element of his own, endowing the Jewish national revival with deep spiritual meaning. He read into the process of Jewish redemption far-reaching implications, not only for Jews but for the entire world.

To the question of how such a view could be squared with the fact that most of those actually taking part in the supposed work of redemption openly violated the Law, Rabbi Kook offered a response which must be seen as the most drastic concession made by Orthodoxy to any of the other tendencies within Judaism. Since, he argued, the resettlement of the ancient Jewish homeland was a precondition of the ultimate redemption, it would serve the divine purpose even if it were achieved through defiance of the Law. This theory certainly soothed the consciences of traditionalists longing to cooperate with the Zionists, but it did not convince the Orthodox anti-Zionists of Palestine. To them, Kook's daring attempt to license lawless behavior by harnessing it to the messianic idea only aggravated the conflict.

The deep split within Orthodoxy over the issue of cooperation with Zionism was reflected in the organization of Orthodox life outside Palestine as well. Those who believed in cooperation joined forces within the framework of the Mizrahi party in 1904. Their opponents, led by the successors of Samson Raphael Hirsch, established their own organization, Agudath Israel, in 1912, declaring their purpose to be the application of "the spirit of Torah"—that is to say, the perspective of traditionalism—to all problems facing the Jews. Thus, Agudath Israel emerged as the Orthodox counterweight to the Zionist movement.

In a sense, then, it was Zionism which drew the Orthodox out of their traditional political passivity, while highlighting the latent tension within Orthodoxy itself. The two extremes were irrevocably divided, for there could be no deeper disagreement than that between the messianic confirmation of Zionism by Rabbi Kook and his followers, and its passionate condemnation by his opponents, who went so far as to brand the Zionist enterprise the work of Satan. The drama of this clash between the two camps was heightened when, in the aftermath of the Balfour Declaration of 1917, the Zionists sought to establish an umbrella organization for all Jews living in Palestine. The anti-Zionist Orthodox, with the active assistance of Agudath Israel, fought strenuously for their independence, thus repeating the Hungarian experience and with a similar result: here, too, the traditionalist minority seceded from the larger community.

The ultra-Orthodox secession seemed, at the time, of little significance. The Zionist movement had achieved international recognition, and with

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the growing support of world Jewry, seemed to be emerging as the determining factor in the political and cultural life of Palestine. The anti-Zionist Orthodox seemed to have been neutralized, while the Orthodox Zionists, unable to wield much influence in the matter of the public standing of religious law, had to be content with provisions made for their special needs—in the field of education, for example.

This state of affairs was radically altered by the two decisive events of Jewish history in the last generation: the Holocaust and the founding of the state of Israel. At first glance, both of these appeared to bode ill for Orthodoxy, and not just in Palestine, for the latter seemed to vindicate the Zionist reading of Jewish history, and the former eliminated Orthodoxy's great demographic reserves. Yet the results ultimately redounded to the renewed vigor of the Orthodox. The remnants of East European Jewry, among them some of its spiritual leaders—rabbis and heads of *yeshivot*—settled either in Palestine/Israel or abroad. In the course of a generation, new communities were reconstructed along the traditional patterns, along with institutions of learning which perpetuated and rekindled the Orthodox spirit.

The leaders of these communities made it their all-consuming passion to rebuild *yeshivot* and *kollelim*, schools where young men, supported either by working wives or by the institution itself, could dedicate themselves wholly to the study of the Law. These efforts proved far more successful than any previous attempts to transplant East European-type centers of learning to Western cities—a fact that may be attributed to the growing prosperity of Western Jewish communities on the one hand and, on the other, to the declining attraction of secularist ideologies.

But despite these successes, and what has been claimed for them, Orthodox leaders did not in fact rebuild the shattered bastions of the Judaism of old. Whereas in Europe these institutions existed within a broad and supportive social environment, in the new centers of the postwar period they were isolated and cut off from prevailing social trends. Where once they catered to the needs of a living environment, producing its spiritual leaders and intellectual elite, in their new settings they were quasi-monastic institutions maintaining themselves only through cultural aloofness. The benefits of their activity accrued only to those in their immediate coterie. If they sometimes gained the support of broader segments of Jewish society, it was mainly because of the sentimental appeal they exercised as reflections of a tragically lost past.

This remains true up until today. The isolationist tendency is evident not only in the social character of these institutions but in their approach to religion as well. Called upon not only to study the Law but also to interpret it, the students at these new Orthodox centers do so only in the narrowest sense of the term, accepting the most stringent application of the Law and setting a standard to which only the most devoted among the larger community are able or willing to adhere. As has often been observed, today's generation of Orthodox Jews is more demanding of itself than its predecessors ever were, and at the same time more exclusive and intransigent toward groups which differ in their interpretation of religious obligations.

Still, from the standpoint of Jewish group survival in the Diaspora, the postwar brand of "Reconstructionist" Orthodoxy, as it might be called, has probably been a positive phenomenon. For one thing it tends to enrich the Jewish communal scene. Although the conspicuous dress, the intransigent religious posture, and the concomitant mental attitudes of the ultra-Orthodox may be disturbing to cultural accommodationists, today's new mood of ethnic pluralism in Western societies can easily and positively embrace even such extreme forms of Jewish particularism. In purely demographic terms, moreover, the high fertility of these groups helps to offset losses in other sectors of the Jewish population. Apart from directly strengthening Orthodoxy, this growth in numbers may also come to provide a larger reservoir for the less Orthodox and even the non-Orthodox, since it cannot be certain that Orthodox families will retain the religious fidelity of all their children.

At least in the Diaspora, then, the existence of ultra-Orthodox communities need not interfere with the interests of the broader Jewish public. Ironically, however, this is not the case in Israel, where Jews themselves are the majority culture.

From the beginning of Israel's existence, the old-guard Orthodox, though living in the shadow of the Zionist state, never accepted its authority except on a *de-facto* basis. This naturally gave rise to complicated relations. While one small but vociferous group of extremists—the Neturei Karta—actually refrained from any contact at all with the state's agencies, and refused even to register as citizens, the majority of the separatist Orthodox, mostly affiliated with the Agudah, did take advantage of state-provided services, though they did not, so to speak, "pay" for them in the currency of moral commitment. To this day no reference is made in their schools to state symbols like the flag or the national anthem, and national holidays like Independence Day, if observed at all, are observed with no sense of personal identification or involvement. A few years ago the worldwide conference of the Agudah, meeting in Jerusalem, chose not to be greeted by the President of Israel, to avoid paying him deference. In short, at least one segment of Orthodox Jewry, which in the Diaspora used to go out of its way to demonstrate its loyalty to the powers-that-be, seems reluctant to tender the same loyalty to the Jewish state.

The reason most commonly given for this refusal is the state's failure to submit sufficiently to the demands of religious law. There is a deeper reason, however. Orthodox Judaism has a fundamen-

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tal difficulty in coming to terms with a pre-messianic Jewish commonwealth. Since Jewish tradition did not foresee a middle stage between exile and redemption, the Jewish state, to certain segments of the Orthodox, represents an illegitimate offspring of history. This problem, to be sure, did not escape the notice of religious Zionists. They solved it by declaring that a Jewish state, whatever its shortcomings as a religious society, is a first step toward the messianic age, and a phrase designating Israel "the beginning of the redemption" was duly incorporated in the wording of the prayer recited by observant Jews for the welfare of their country of residence. But the separatist Orthodox do not accept this formula. Thus, while Orthodox Jews all over the world pray for the welfare of their country, as prescribed in the prayerbook, in Israel of all places some Orthodox Jews omit the relevant passage.

A challenge of a different order comes from the camp of religious Zionism itself. In the early decades of Israeli statehood a new type of *yeshiva* began to appear on the scene whose aim was to combine Talmud study with agricultural training in accordance with the precepts of religious Zionism. The first school of this type, founded by a former student of Rabbi Kook, Moshe Zvi Neriah, was soon followed by others, catering mainly to members of the religious Zionist youth movement, Bnei Akiva. In time, the provision for agricultural training was dropped from the curriculum, but the positive, even ardent, commitment to Zionism remained.

By the 60's and 70's the Zionist-*yeshiva* idea had caught on to such a degree that the map of Orthodox educational institutions in Israel was completely altered. Whereas in the pre-state period intensive Talmud study had been limited to the Yiddish-speaking traditionalist population, now there was a network of new institutions attracting a growing number of pupils from the broader Orthodox public—a student body whose outlook was substantially different from that of the older-style *yeshivot*.

One difference lay in the matter of military service. Following the establishment of the state, Ben-Gurion, then minister of defense, exempted *yeshiva* students—who were only a small number at the time—from serving in the Israeli army. The older non-Zionist *yeshivot* thus became attractive to families who viewed military service as a spiritual danger to their sons. The Zionist *yeshivot*, by contrast, appealed to students for whom military service was a supreme national, and hence religious, obligation.

The question asked by these young people brought up with a belief in the messianic significance of Jewish statehood is a stark one: why does the road to redemption have to stop halfway? Why not take steps to hasten the culmination of the messianic process?

Such questions, present ever since the founding of the state, were articulated in their most acute form in the aftermath of the Six-Day War of 1967, when the high-pitched apprehension which had preceded the conflict gave way to elation at a victory that seemed to border on the supernatural. Convinced that the messianic era was indeed upon them, some of these youthful Orthodox—who became the founders of Gush Emunim—believed that they knew exactly what steps were necessary to bring about the final redemption. In contrast to the leaders of the state, who appeared uncertain about what to do with those parts of the historical Land of Israel which had come into Israel's possession, the Gush Emunim bloc, supported by the son and successor of Rabbi Kook at his *yeshiva* in Jerusalem, had no doubts whatsoever. To them it was evident that full redemption rested upon settlement of the whole of biblical Israel. In the end, this inspired minority outmaneuvered a vacillating government, thereby setting in motion the struggles which have dominated public consciousness in Israel ever since.

WHAT we have witnessed over the past few decades is thus an extraordinary transformation whereby a habitually passive and politically docile element has, in the context of Jewish statehood, displayed an unwontedly aggressive activism, to the point of assailing the state's authority on two flanks. How this came about becomes clear in light of the past. Historically speaking, there is no doubt that the driving force of Zionism was its deep involvement with the messianic expectations of the Jewish people. But this involvement exacted, and still exacts, a high price. It is no simple matter for a small and young nation to harbor two militant minorities, both invoking the supremacy of divine authority to challenge the state.

To be sure, there were some who from the very beginning recognized the dangerous potential of messianism as a social-political force. The late Gershom Scholem, for example, demanded an explicit repudiation of any connection between Zionism and messianism. But Scholem's demand was illusory. For without the messianic hope of restoration to its ancient homeland, why should the Jewish people have chosen this spot of all places on earth on which to reconstruct a national state?

The hope is not to sever the historical link between Zionism and messianic restoration, but to be realistic about it. Does not the success of Zionism—a reestablished sovereignty in the Jewish homeland—constitute an astounding, if only partial, realization of the messianic dream? The notion that Jewish political independence must automatically lead to the realization of all other Jewish ideals is the great fallacy of contemporary messianism. The commitment to messianic belief may have provided the energy for the establishment of Israel, but the messianic tradition certainly does not contain a blueprint for the conduct of the daily affairs of the state. Upon the realization of this fact by the Orthodox much in the future of Israel may depend.

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Vietnam & the 60's Generation

A Memoir

Scott McConnell

GENERATIONAL conflict, scholars have remarked, is what Americans have in place of class struggle. The triumph of new men riding into power with new ideas has long been part of the script of American politics, responsible for many a reformist surge. In its most recent electoral manifestation, the generational theme fueled the Gary Hart campaign; the relatively youthful candidate whose advertising harked to the youthful idealism of the 1960's seemed, for a moment last spring, poised to ride the wave of the baby boom's impressive demographics all the way to the Presidency.

Those whom Hart sought to represent made up not just another new generation, but the largest and wealthiest generation ever to appear on the American political scene. They were the Vietnam generation, a category which can be stretched to take in not only the three million Americans who fought in the war but the vast legions who militantly opposed it, and the millions of others whose political attitudes were shaped by the conflict. When members of this generation were mere college students, it was said of them by a blue-ribbon commission that they were "the best informed, the most intelligent, and the most idealistic this country has ever known"—this by way of explaining the violent disturbances on the nation's campuses and why a much discussed "generation gap" had grown between them and their elders.

The mere mention of these old catch phrases is enough to suggest why Hart failed to break through even after his campaign caught on. For 60's idealism now has a hollow ring; the assumptions underlying it have been mocked by the march of real events. One can surmise, even, that the 60's sensibility posed a dilemma for the Hart campaign itself: was it really good politics to associate the candidate, even tangentially, with that decade's revolutionary posturing?

At the heart of this question still lies the matter of Vietnam. The 60's spirit owed everything to the war, which became the source for conclusions not only about America's foreign policy but about the very essence of the nation itself. The parents of the Vietnam generation, depicted in one of the decade's notorious slogans as untrustworthy because they were over thirty, had been politically shaped, in varying degrees, by the Depression, the failure of isolationism, World War II, and Stalin's subjugation of Eastern Europe in its aftermath. For their children, Vietnam would become the single foreign-policy reference point. For a decade the war could inspire rage against all that America stood for; its supposed lessons still have the power to summon up an isolationist aversion to the use of American power under nearly every conceivable condition.

I was part of that generation whose first political passions were sparked by the question of what America was doing in Vietnam. While younger by a few years than those at the center of the protest movement, I did what I could to catch up by immersing myself in its literature and emulating its political attitudes. What now seems most striking about these attitudes is the extreme provincialism on which they were based. The generation that set out so defiantly to reject the political lessons that its parents had learned from Munich and the cold war developed a world view that skipped over the most salient aspects of 20th-century history. In its politics the protest generation was the insulated generation, insulated not only—as was frequently remarked at the time—from the realization that affluence was not granted to Americans by a law of nature, but insulated as well from any sense of how tragic political history had been in modern times. We were born into a world shaped by American power, a power we assumed to be invincible and eternal; our ignorance of the forces that power stood against was breathtaking. Our sensibilities thus comfortably cushioned, we assumed the responsibility for passing judgment on America's policies, and found them criminal.

My own awareness of what I would soon come to think of as America's criminality began in 1966, when I was only fourteen. I came upon Felix Greene's book *Vietnam, Vietnam*; he could not have found a more receptive reader than I. For if I was already "against the war"—and thought that President Johnson had conned us by promising no wider war in Asia—I was still very much

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an empty vessel, and wide open to an artfully made moralistic argument. Greene's skillful work ignited in me a rage against the American government, which did not completely subside until the last American soldiers were withdrawn from Vietnam.

One cannot go back to Greene's book without recognizing that it is a superb sample of its craft. Designed like an album with overwide pages to display its pictures to greatest effect, Greene's is a story told in photos which still shock: suffering Vietnamese women and children in their graceful peasant clothes; large, encumbered, seemingly invulnerable American soldiers shoving their way through the villages; an occasional American jet searing the sky overhead, leaving destruction in its wake. These photos are accompanied by a minimal text, a history just long enough to put them in context, to tell of the Vietnamese people's struggle for national self-determination.

For Greene hardly wastes his time refuting the American government's contention that North Vietnamese troops have penetrated into the South; nor does he argue that the conflict is a civil war. What is going on, Greene maintains, is simply a "war by the Vietnamese people against the military invasion of their country by the United States"—with the various governments in office in Saigon representing nothing more than a mask for American conquest. Now Greene's account does not go so far as to deny that there is a political side to the war; there are, he acknowledges, Communists among the Vietnamese that America is conquering. On page 32 and again on page 136 he comes right out and mentions them. The National Liberation Front (NLF), he writes, which is the vanguard of the struggle against the American invasion, contains among its leaders, "Buddhists, Catholics, businessmen, Communists, socialists, liberal intellectuals, and representatives of the peasant organizations and the mountain minority tribes."

I absorbed all of this, noting the desire of the NLF to "promulgate all democratic freedoms" while some American general wanted to "bomb them back to the Stone Age" (General Curtis Le May's infamous remark and Greene's summation of the NLF's ten-point program adjoined each other). It probably would have made very little difference to me if I had recognized that Communists played a significant role in the Vietnamese people's struggle.

Presumably I knew that Ho Chi Minh was a Communist, though Greene manages to quote him several times (usually his poems) without so much as alluding to his ideological affiliation. What was important was that no less authoritative a figure than Dwight Eisenhower was cited as claiming that Ho Chi Minh would have won 80 percent of the Vietnamese vote if the country had been unified after the Geneva Convention of 1954. This was enough to legitimate Ho in my eyes; it would be impossible to count the number of times during the next four years that I triumphantly unleashed Eisenhower's quotation upon any of my friends or relatives so hapless or gullible as to believe that there were a significant number of Vietnamese who might have good reason for not wanting unification of their country under terms dictated by the NLF.

And none of them, no teacher, no relative, no fellow adolescent, ever retorted that it might not be so easy to campaign against candidate Ho Chi Minh in a place like North Vietnam. Such a response might have forced me to reflect on a question that I had never before considered: what kind of election could take place in an unfree society? Would the cutting edge of Eisenhower's remark have been dulled by knowledge of the vast number of executions and jailings that had accompanied North Vietnam's land-collectivization process? Would I have been caught short if it had been pointed out that Hitler's National Socialists got 33 percent of the German vote in November 1932—and, one short year later, after assuming control of the levers of state power and punishment, 88 percent?

Certainly one was unlikely to be exposed to this kind of argument at Exeter, the elite New England boarding school to which I was sent in 1966. For if the late 60's were troubled ones for that august institution, no issue caused the faculty, the students, and the administration less trouble than the Vietnam war. At no time during my four years there do I recall a faculty member making a case for American policy; it was all but impossible to find a student to argue with about the war.

It would be unfair to attribute the ubiquity of anti-war sentiment at Exeter to the simple desire to avoid military service; Exeter boys were assured of going to good colleges and the draft seemed terribly remote. Much of Exeter's reigning political spirit could be described as simply the feeling that America's leaders had taken leave of their senses in committing our country to warfare in faraway Vietnam, and it was this comparatively sensible feeling that underlay the great blossoming of (Eugene) McCarthy buttons on corduroy lapels everywhere during the winter of 1968.

But there was another side as well to the anti-war ethos at Exeter—one that cannot be so sweetly remembered. For it was not the case that all Exeter students were against the war; and there was a faction that resisted the concomitant notion that the President was some kind of mass murderer. These were generally tough kids from towns like Worcester, Massachusetts and Manchester, New Hampshire who came to Exeter not for four years but only one—after they had graduated from their local high schools. They were good at sports; without them Exeter could never have fielded a winning football or basketball team. Only the

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rarest of them was any good at taking tests or writing papers; for them a year at Exeter was a route to an athletic scholarship at an Ivy League college. A number of them probably had older brothers serving in Vietnam, and in any event they did not share our tremendous condescension toward those who thought America's struggle in Vietnam a decent one. And so it happened that one of the school's cleverer boys, in a widely noticed column in the school newspaper, created for them the name "kulaks."

So nicely did this name, by its very ring, seem to capture the essence of these not very articulate youngsters, whose attitudes and haircuts were so out of touch with the age, as well as of the larger realm of beer-swilling, flag-waving white-ethnic middle America from which they came, that among the Academy's sophisticates it caught on immediately. Undoubtedly there were some of us who, if only by the accident of Russian ancestry, knew that the word "kulak" was a term for the 10 million landowning Russian peasants murdered by Stalin and not a simple neologism freshly conceived by the onomatopoetic sensibility of one of our cohorts. But adept as I had become at ridiculing the geopolitical and moral rationales behind America's foreign policy of containment, I had no idea of what a "kulak" was; nor, for that matter, did anyone else I knew.

For here was the gaping hole in Exeter's curriculum. Exeter boys, reminded with numbing regularity that they were the brightest slice of America's most intelligent and idealistic generation ever, were wonderfully instructed in America's problems. It was expected, I recall, that one would grapple with Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*, Kenneth Keniston's *Young Radicals*, and *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* in religion (!) class. Who could deny that these were books of considerable relevance to the American experience? But we were at the same time being educated in splendid insulation from the notion that democratic societies had committed enemies; we learned next to nothing of the sorts of alternatives to bourgeois liberalism that the 20th century had to offer. I cannot say why: perhaps because of a sense that we were living in the era of "the end of ideology" (in Daniel Bell's phrase) so that learning something of the history of fascism and Communism was no longer "relevant"; or perhaps because the aftertaste left by the (Joseph) McCarthy era simply put it beyond the boundaries of good form to talk about Communism at all. The result was the same in any case. Exeter students learned nothing of what it meant to be a small farmer in Stalin's Russia or Ho Chi Minh's Vietnam. That it had been part of Communist policy to "liquidate as a class" the "kulaks" was something we had never heard spoken of. It was perfectly possible to graduate from the Academy with high honors and be altogether incapable of writing three factual paragraphs on the history of any Communist regime (or for that matter of any totalitarian regime whether of the Right or Left).

No axiom seemed more obvious to me at the age of eighteen than one which stated that the accumulation of more knowledge about society could only lead to a greater radical commitment. It was set in my mind that to be well read, to be an "intellectual," was practically synonymous with despising what America had become. Still, I have never forgotten one of the first times that principle was contradicted. I was having dinner at the house of a friend. His father was Marshall Shulman, the well-known Sovietologist who would later take an important position in Jimmy Carter's State Department. I casually commented that if America was the most violent nation in the world, it was probably because we were a nation of immigrants—violent types who could not fit in even in their places of origin. To my great surprise, my friend's father all but leapt from the table in exasperation, before explaining with some emotion that a good many people had come to this country because they were the sort who could not live without liberty, or were themselves escaping violent oppression. It was the first time I had ever heard a man who wrote books speak with such open patriotism, or confront so brazenly a contention of New Left origin.

But if that was surprising, I was soon to receive a greater shock—this time from my own father. For although I knew little about the origins of America's immigrants, I had read a good deal about Vietnam, and not for a moment did it occur to me that someone arguing in support of Richard Nixon's policies could say something like "Why don't you go see for yourself?" Yet some days after Nixon's 1970 incursion into Cambodia, after Kent State, and after an attack by some construction workers on a peace march in the heart of New York City, that is exactly what my father said to me. It was late at night, and he and my stepmother were just returning from a party and wanted to go to bed, but I was sprawled in their way in the living room, and demanded that they stand and answer for Nixon's latest crimes. So for the umpteenth time we went into it: Diem's subversion of the Geneva agreements, the Vietnamese people's right to national unification, American capitalism's assault on the environment. Because of the late hour and the drinks consumed, the talk got nastier than usual; my father's offer of a round-trip ticket to Saigon may have headed off a shoving war in the living room. Without a moment's reflection, I accepted.

It should not be difficult to imagine the superficial attractions that steamy and sensuous city, which then throbbed to a Jimi Hendrix beat, had for a boy of eighteen just released from a New Hampshire boarding school.

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But Saigon had a deeper appeal as well. Within weeks of my arrival I fell in with a group of young American journalists and expatriates—men and women in their mid-twenties, all loosely associated with Dispatch News Service. Without much fuss from the Saigon authorities, I acquired press credentials of my own, and extended my visa.

The group around Dispatch had qualities shared by none of the reporters from the big mainstream press. It was not just that they were "against the war"—all the journalists were—nor was it that they made no effort to feign objectivity. Unlike the mainstream journalists they had considerable knowledge and appreciation of Vietnamese culture. Some of them had done stints in the Vietnamese countryside as teachers or agronomists with the various volunteer service agencies that proliferated parallel to the American war effort; others had learned to love Vietnam through the tragically necessary work of bringing wounded children back to the United States for treatment. They spoke the Vietnamese language, they knew something of its literature, they were familiar with the religious groups that flourished in the South and the spirit that infused them. Vietnamese friends from Saigon's dissident intellectual elite—that elusive "Third Force" that was not Communist but could supposedly make a deal with the Communists—came to visit us.

For me, exposure to this sort of sensibility laid a basis for formulating a more nuanced anti-war position. For what I had previously believed about the war was simply not tenable in the face of the evidence of my own senses. However hard it was to admire the Thieu government, it was impossible to maintain that the people of the South were crying out to Hanoi, or to the Vietcong, for deliverance. One heard too many stories like that of the American teacher in Hué whose students risked their lives to hide him while the North Vietnamese searched the city during the Tet offensive to believe that many Vietnamese in the South yearned only to be rid of the American yoke.

Once one admitted that most Vietnamese in the South feared the Communists, the anti-war position required new buttressing if it were to continue to command one's idealism. The answer we arrived at was to stress that any solution of the war worked out by the Vietnamese themselves was to be preferred to its continuation. We asserted that it was foolish to talk about Vietnam by reference to alien categories like Marxism or "freedom"; any Vietnamese solution arrived at after the Americans departed would ensure a better future for these people we had come to admire than prolonging the struggle. As this argument emanated from people drenched in Vietnamese poetry, it was for me utterly convincing; for it was clear not only that the war was exacting a terrible human cost, but that the huge American economic and cultural presence was also tearing apart what remained of Vietnam's traditional heritage. (Today, one can only retort that since 1975, rather more Vietnamese than we would have thought possible have plainly showed how much they care about the allegedly alien concept of freedom.)

Gradually it became clear to me that no one in this group was doing much actual journalism. Instead, the Dispatch people were making their contribution to the anti-war movement by acting as tour guides for prominent liberal Americans who came to Saigon to find the facts and deplore them. Not every figure prominent in the American anti-war movement was willing to go so far as to make a pilgrimage to Hanoi, there to visit kindergartens and hospitals and then enthusiastically report on their experience among (as Tom Hayden and Staughton Lynd described the North Vietnamese after such a visit) "the gentlest people we had ever known." There was public-relations utility in coming to Saigon as well, and those around the Dispatch circle played a part in informing liberal congressmen, clergy, or simple activists of the travails of Saigon's political prisoners, or even arranging for them to be teargassed or perhaps arrested by the Saigon police for exercising their right to demonstrate in the streets.

One of the most successful of these tours took place within a month of my arrival in the country. A delegation of some dozen American peace activists, led by Bishop Paul Moore and Rabbi Balfour Brickner, came to Saigon; somehow it was arranged that they would demonstrate with students from Saigon University who represented the putative "Third Force" position, in favor of American withdrawal and the formation of a "coalition" government which would make peace. We linked up with the students at the university and began to march up one of Saigon's central boulevards toward the presidential palace. To my astonishment (for perhaps at some level I did not really believe what I had been saying for years about the Thieu regime) the Saigon police did not take a tolerant view of our protest, and began lobbing teargas grenades at us before we even got our chants and slogans properly synchronized. Bishop Moore and I found shelter pressed against the side door of an adjacent building which belonged to some large American corporation. Comparing notes, we agreed that the gas seemed much more potent than the kind used by the American police. And while no one was in fact hurt in the demonstration, Bishop Moore later announced to the press that "It was one of the most brutal police actions I've seen" and that he was "horrified by their methods." Some members of the delegation darkly warned that when they returned home they would tell stories about students being tortured.

In spite of an experience like this, as the year progressed I found that it rang false to go on upholding the position that the American and South Vietnamese side was lacking in all virtue. After

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all, in common with most journalists, I liked the American soldiers I knew. And outside of Saigon one was always grateful for their presence and also for the presence of South Vietnamese troops. There was, for instance, an island monastery in the Mekong River, where the monks had constructed out of papier-maché a relief map of reunified Vietnam the size of a small gymnasium floor, so they could walk back and forth on it. It was a favorite place for an overnight excursion, with a spiritual "peace-now" aura. But in venturing there or anywhere else in the country by motorcycle, I could not pretend that I did not feel better if South Vietnamese troops were at least in the vicinity.

Thus to my mother and stepfather—themselves longtime members of the "progressive" camp—I wrote home testifying to a certain political confusion; to hawks like my father I refused to cede any ground, and sent strident letters about America's aggression against "the noble and beautiful Vietnamese spirit."

Cambodia, too, muddied the issues. Twice in 1971 I visited Phnom Penh. As I had read next to nothing about the country, my belief that its government was illegitimate was unencumbered by knowledge of the reasons why. Even then, as the city was filling with refugees, I was struck by its graceful boulevards and the jovial manner of its people. This appeal was enhanced by the lack of a large American presence, for there were no sleazy service industries catering to Americans. Having only the evidence of my own senses to go by, I felt myself completely on the side of those teenage Cambodian boys and girls who rode out to the front every day with their vintage French rifles to try to drive the Khmer Rouge and their Vietcong allies away from the river on which the city's food supply arrived. Writing home in words which must have amazed my resolutely anti-war mother, I expressed a wish that had not crossed my consciousness since the age of fourteen: couldn't the United States, I wondered, do something to help these people?

When I returned to New York and entered Columbia College in 1971, I found it easy enough to suppress that kind of thought, but I could not summon my old enthusiasm for the peace movement. I took part in Columbia's 1972 anti-war strike—the farcical replay of the 1968 uprising which had inspired me to attend Columbia in the first place. But now I demonstrated with diminished fervor, moved by something like habit and obligation to an old cause. Unable to chant "One side's right, one side's wrong, we're on the side of the Vietcong," I trudged dutifully along the picket line outside the Asian Studies building and kept silent. The 1973 armistice, terminating America's active role in the hostilities, released me from all care about Vietnam, and in a stroke eliminated what had always loomed as the single impassable obstacle that stood in the way of considering America a decent country.

An old Asia hand and veteran journalist named Keyes Beech has recently recounted an incident that took place in 1979 on the Thai-Cambodia border. He was riding back toward Bangkok with a younger reporter to file a report on another Vietnamese "border violation" and his colleague surprised him by starting to denounce the Vietnamese Communists in strident terms. Beech asked the young man what had happened to the "flaming revolutionary" he had once known in Saigon, for his young friend had been one of the most blatantly anti-American members of the press corps. "Ah," came the reply, "but that was before I had covered two socialist countries."

In this vignette can be found all that I, my Exeter classmates, and my friends at Dispatch did not know about the Vietnam war throughout the period in which we were completely taken up with it and what it supposedly told us about America. That is to say, we knew nothing whatsoever about the Communist political tradition, and had no real sense of why the United States should try to stem its expansion. True, the Vietnamese Communists did not proclaim in advance that they would close the curtain on the "pluralist" National Liberation Front, or send one million of their people into jungle "reeducation zones," or drive hundreds of thousands of their countrymen into the open sea; and, true, the Cambodian Communists did not announce their intention of killing one third of their own population. But we in the West had even less reason to be surprised at these occurrences than the people of Indochina. For the political methods, the rhetoric, and the intentions of Vietnamese Communism were of a piece with a political movement that has, in every instance since its first victory in 1917, revealed itself to be a scourge that knows no boundaries of space or time.

Yet during the 1960's, though real knowledge of this tradition was available in principle, our culture all but consigned it to oblivion. For reasons yet to be satisfactorily explained, a whole generation coming of age during the Vietnam era found it unchic, uncool, and irrelevant to contemplate the sheer awesome drama of the Communist wielding of power, the waves of human misery that it has caused, and the singular courage of the individuals who have suffered it, who have survived it, who have found ways to transcend it.

As for my own case, I learned more of what the Vietnam war was about in my final two years as a Columbia undergraduate than I had in all the previous years of obsessive preoccupation. What was responsible was no single revelatory event, but simply good books and good teachers. The starting point was Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. As often happens with people who are (or think of themselves as) on the Left, noticing that Communists behave like fascists is the first step toward anti-Communism. Arendt's

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classic exploration of the similarities of political technique used by fascist and Communist parties, and of the similar consequences for the relationship between the rulers and the ruled, was the first thing I had ever read about the Communist movement that made me recoil. Studying European history could only reinforce these lessons. Fritz Stern, Columbia's renowned historian of modern Germany, made vivid in his lectures how that nation's Communists and fascists together hammered at their common foe, Weimar's fragile democracy. By my junior year I was engrossed in writing a term paper on the Prague Spring of 1968.

This kind of thing provided a context for comprehending the images that flooded the television screen during the spring of 1975: terror-struck Vietnamese, now fleeing not the war but the advancing Communist armies. Saigon fell on the day of the final lecture in a course in American diplomatic history, and when the professor opened the floor to comments my own confused feelings about the war came pouring out. Not once, I said, in all the time I and my friends had expended in deploring the war, and deploring America for waging it, had I ever anticipated anything like the sadness I was feeling on that day. We, who had in so many small ways helped this day come to pass, had imagined that it would be a time for celebration; now it appeared that we had aided in bringing something terrible into being.

UNLIKE the South Vietnamese, however, or the Laotians, or the Cambodians now absorbing the lessons of Marxism-Leninism, and unlike the American soldiers who had tried to save them, by and large the 1960's protest generation emerged from all this history unscathed, and ready to start its own march upward through America's institutions. Its members now fill the airwaves, the editorial pages, and the halls of Congress with warnings that Vietnam teaches how we should never again try to halt the spread of Communism in the Third World. And while it is no longer rhetorically prudent (particularly if you are a Congressman and read the opinion polls) to proclaim that the use of American power against Communist expansion is imperialist, criminal, or fascist, it is quite all right to call it "counterproductive" and to invoke the futility of standing in the way of history. Yet the result is much the same—the Communists will have guns and the people resisting them will not.

It is noticeable that today the most dogged and consistent opponents of an anti-Communist foreign policy in the Third World are those whose political beliefs were shaped well before America withdrew from Vietnam—those who learned the "lessons" of Vietnam in the 1960's. In all but a few cases sensibilities thus formed have remained impervious to what has happened since 1975, in Indochina and elsewhere. Thus, Gary Hart, who has made an obvious effort to rethink the assumptions of McGovern-style liberalism, and who has even proclaimed that the unilateral-disarmament programs advocated by many peace groups would make nuclear war more likely, has also stuck resolutely to the view that the role of American power in the Third World should be diminished. For this is the sacred ground of his generational politics; and when one examines the speeches and voting records of the other young Democrats who entered Congress in the 1974 wave, one recognizes that it is their sacred ground as well.

That this view has now taken over mainstream opinion in the Democratic party is a development whose importance is difficult to overestimate. Those with a taste for historical irony will recall that one of the (not very good) reasons for which America's leaders originally committed troops to Vietnam was to demonstrate that the United States could contain Communist-inspired "wars of national liberation" under unfavorable circumstances in remote regions of the Third World just as surely as we could prevent outright military aggression in Europe. Today, one of America's two major parties routinely opposes granting even military *assistance* to governments or guerrilla forces resisting Communist expansion on the American continent itself. So it is, in the allegedly conservative climate of the 1980's, that the conscience of the party which once nominated John F. Kennedy can be more readily outraged by the use of American power against Communism in Grenada than by the Soviet killing fields in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, it is now clear that the 60's generation has largely failed to transmit its foreign-policy assumptions to the generation growing up behind it. Political pollsters found the most surprising result of the last presidential election to be the sharp swing of young voters to the Republicans (an increase of more than 20 percent over Reagan's score in 1980). But there has been no lack of straws in the wind pointing toward attitudinal shifts of this kind. At one level we have such indicators as the popularity of a patriotic movie like *An Officer and a Gentleman*; at another level there is the upsurge on campuses of student newspapers that delight in satirizing the liberal university establishments. Youthful idealism is no longer the monopoly of the Left; there are a great many talented young conservatives who are passing up careers in business and the professions to seek work in the realm of public policy and public opinion.

SUCH a climatic shift has many causes, of which a good number are surely domestic and internal. As for the external ones, no single world development since 1975 has had anything like the impact on American youth that Vietnam had on the generation of the 60's; yet it seems that just about every event in the interna-

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tional arena since 1975 has been expressly designed to undermine the political sensibility of that generation.

Those who have come of age since 1975 have grown up seeing something beyond the imagination of the insulated generation: what happens when American power is not there. They have seen not only what has happened to the people of Indochina, which could have been anticipated. In Ethiopia, they have seen the Cubans and Soviets install a brutal tyrant who would eventually give the world a particularly vivid demonstration of where food production and distribution rank in the Communist hierarchy of values. In Iran they have seen the Ayatollah Khomeini eviscerate the liberal assumption that deeply held anti-Western principles can coincide with an abiding concern for human rights. In Afghanistan, they have seen the Soviet Union, untroubled by outbreaks of conscience on the home front, undertake a leisurely textbook demonstration of how to destroy a people. And they have seen floods of refugees pouring out over every part of the globe, traveling in one direction only: away from those who proclaim themselves the sworn enemies of capitalism and bourgeois democracy.

It has been America's blessed fate to learn its political lessons at prices incomparably lower than those paid by other peoples. Our deepest instruction in global politics, in the nature of totalitarian mass movements, and in the fragility of free societies, has come to us through the suffering of others. This kind of learning-on-credit cannot go on indefinitely. Must we wait for America's enemies to seize more territory, in regions closer or more strategic to the United States than Indochina, before we can settle the issue of the rightness of American engagement against Communist expansion in the Third World? For such events to shatter the foreign-policy assumptions of the 60's generation in so terrible a way would be, for the rest of us, the most pyrrhic of victories.

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Crisis in the Pacific

Owen Harries

SOME YEARS ago, members of the staff of the London *Times* held a competition to see who could produce the most boring headline. From memory, the winning entry was along the lines of "Small Earthquake in South America: Few Hurt." For many Americans, a crisis in U.S. relations with New Zealand, centered on the question of whether American naval vessels will be allowed to continue visiting New Zealand ports, is bound to appear in similarly unexciting terms: a case of "Minor Difficulties with Small Ally: Little at Stake."

After all, as a country New Zealand is about as remote as they come—for Americans a real case of "a faraway country about which we know little"—and from the vantage point of New York or Washington, good peripheral vision is required to be aware of it at all. New Zealand has a population of only three million, owns no scarce resource, is internally stable, and suffers from no discernible external threat—hardly the stuff that international drama is made of. On the face of it, the immediate point at issue also appears trivial. Strategically and logistically, visits by U.S. vessels to New Zealand ports are not important, let alone essential. They are rest-and-recreational visits, and have been made infrequently.

What, it might therefore well be asked, is there to be concerned about, especially in a world in which so many urgent problems are already facing this country? If a more positive reaction than indifference is evoked, in an America which is increasingly impatient with allies and which rightly resents being put upon or taken for granted, it is likely to be exasperation. Indeed, one does detect some tendency to "kick the cat" in this instance—to vent on New Zealand some of the pent-up frustration felt about the behavior of other allies.

Unfortunately much too much is at stake for the confrontation between the U.S. and New Zealand either to be dismissed or used in this way. In the first place—and it is not a trivial point for those who stress the importance of ideology in U.S. foreign policy—New Zealand is an immaculately democratic country in a part of the world where there are few such and, the present episode apart, it has been an exemplary friend and ally to America. In fact, New Zealand and Australia—the other party immediately involved in the crisis—are the only two countries which have fought alongside the U.S. in all the four major wars of this century. Decency, as well as ideological considerations, requires that a falling out with such a country be treated seriously and carefully.

But for those who take a harsher and more pragmatic view of foreign policy there are also compelling reasons. First, because of the particularly intimate relationship between New Zealand and Australia, the confrontation puts the future of the ANZUS* alliance as a whole in jeopardy. Second, it does so at a time when there is clear and disturbing evidence that the politico-strategic environment in the Southeast Asia-Southwest Pacific area is in danger of deteriorating seriously and when the need for an effective alliance is likely to be enhanced rather than diminished. Third, quite apart from regional considerations, the relationship with Australia is extremely important—perhaps even "vital"—in terms of the U.S.'s global network of defense communications and intelligence (a fact known to few Americans, but to every Australian schoolboy).

All these considerations point to the need to contain the damage caused to the ANZUS alliance by the dispute and to preserve its essential integrity, particularly its U.S.-Australian component. But there is also a very important counter-consideration. The U.S. has many allies, and the question of U.S. ship visits is an actual or potential source of friction in many of them. What is happening in the Antipodes is being watched closely in Western Europe, Tokyo, and, not least, Moscow. It is therefore a matter of deep concern to the U.S. that the New Zealand dispute be resolved in a way which does not create a precedent encouraging to anti-nuclear or anti-American elements elsewhere. This means either that New Zealand must be persuaded to change its policy, or that, if it persists, the cost to it of doing so must be made unattractively, and visibly, high.

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* ANZUS, of course, is the acronym for "Australia-New Zealand-United States."

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In short, the crisis presents the Reagan administration with an extremely difficult problem, in that American interests require the simultaneous pursuit of two objectives which are not easily reconcilable.

THE current crisis began in July 1984, when the New Zealand Labour* party won an election and formed a government under Prime Minister David Lange. A notable feature of the new government is its extreme youth, the average age of cabinet members at the time of their appointment being forty-two. Lange's has the distinction therefore of being the first Western government composed mainly of members of the Vietnam generation, people who came to maturity in the 1960's and whose adult experience of international affairs corresponds almost entirely with the tormented, divisive years of that war, "détente," and the indecisive Presidency of Jimmy Carter. As such the Lange government may have a significance beyond itself, as a portent of what is likely to come in other countries in the near future.

The new government quickly announced that it intended to implement a policy which had been a prominent part of the Labour party's election manifesto: the banning of nuclear-armed and nuclear-powered ships from New Zealand's ports. Indeed, even if the government had itself had doubts about the policy, which apparently it did not, it would have had little choice in the matter, for the policy had solid support in the Labour party and was very popular in the country at large. Opinion polls showed 58 percent of New Zealanders in favor of banning nuclear-armed ships, and in the 1984 election three out of the four competing parties (including a new breakaway right-wing group) had it as part of their platforms.

This extraordinary level of popular backing was a particular manifestation of a more general and very strong "nuclear allergy," the existence of which, in a country so far removed from the centers of tension in the world and so improbable a target for nuclear attack, requires explanation. One important element in such an explanation is the bitter resentment felt by New Zealanders toward French nuclear testing in the South Pacific, on the Mururoa Atoll in French Polynesia. New Zealand (like Australia) has protested against these tests repeatedly but in vain. Their persistence has done more than anything else to sensitize New Zealanders on the nuclear issue and to provide credibility and ammunition to the anti-nuclear movement. There is a twofold sense of outrage: first, against the threat of pollution (greatly exaggerated) to an environment which is both extraordinarily beautiful and otherwise virtually unsullied; and second, against what is seen as a gross intrusion into the region by an outside power.

The latter is particularly important. New Zealanders are accustomed to thinking of the South Pacific as their own backyard. In their eyes, the French tests (and, to a lesser though significant degree, American and Japanese proposals—for the time being shelved—to use the region as a dumping ground for nuclear waste) represent the treating of that yard as a sort of global vacant lot, in which great powers feel free to do what they would not dream of doing closer to home. In this respect, the banning of U.S.-ship visits represents a form of compensatory action: if nothing can be done about French testing, all the more reason for taking action to protect the region on a matter over which New Zealand does have control.

The need for compensation may also be a factor in a deeper sense, for recent decades have not been kind to New Zealand. Always the most "British" of the old dominions, it has seen its hitherto very intimate ties with the mother country weaken dramatically and has faced its own "end of empire" problem. Britain has withdrawn from east of Suez. It has joined the European Economic Community (EEC) and relegated the Commonwealth to secondary importance in its scheme of things. In 1948, 73 percent of New Zealand's exports went to Britain; by 1980, less than 14 percent. But the economic consequences are less important than the effects on the spirit—the sense of being abandoned, of ceasing any longer to be linked, by close association with a leading actor on the international stage, to the center of things, the big game.

For New Zealanders there is really no substitute for this lost British connection. The ties with Australia are close, but they are the ties of brotherhood not motherhood, and besides, Australia itself is too provincial and small to fit the bill. The U.S., on the other hand, is too big, and its interests too varied, its culture and ethos too different to serve the purpose. The decline both of Britain itself and of New Zealand's links with it has therefore brought home to New Zealanders the full extent of their isolation and marginality.

In the circumstances, the need to find some way of being relevant to the world, of being connected to larger events, of being attended to, assumes enormous importance. Yet for New Zealand the opportunities in this respect are very few: apart from the visit of American ships, it is virtually untouched by larger events; and apart from banning those ships, and presenting that act in modish terms as a regional contribution to the sacred cause of arms control, it is difficult to think of a plausible way New Zealand could find of attracting significant attention to itself in the world.

All this is not to deny that those who support the anti-nuclear movement in New Zealand have genuine convictions. Nor, for that matter, is it to deny that those who stress the influence of the pro-Soviet Left in manipulating public opinion may be identifying an important element in the situa-

* The New Zealand party uses the British spelling; the Australian Labor party, the American.

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tion (one can, in any case, take it for granted that the local Communists will have been trying their hardest to do this; and resolutions passed by the annual conference of the New Zealand Labour party to withdraw completely from ANZUS, as well as the affiliation of significant parts of the trade-union movement to the Soviet-led World Federation of Trade Unions, suggest that they have not been entirely unsuccessful in their efforts). It is rather to attempt to explain why those convictions are so widespread in a country where the nuclear risk appears so small, why those who propagate the cause have found such fertile ground for their efforts.

To return to the course of recent events, the announcement of the ban on nuclear-armed and -powered ships effectively closed New Zealand to all American warships, since the U.S. has a firm policy of neither confirming nor denying whether any of its vessels is nuclear-armed, and since virtually all of them are capable of carrying a nuclear weapon. The U.S. responded to the announcement by making it clear that the new policy was unacceptable from an ally and that there would be no deviation from the neither-confirm-nor-deny rule. At the same time Washington did not press the issue and indicated that there would be no request for a visit through the rest of 1984, while the two governments reviewed their positions and discussed the matter. The New Zealand government, perhaps surprised by the firmness of the American reaction, concentrated its efforts on the feasibility of determining for itself whether or not a particular ship was carrying nuclear weapons, thus making it unnecessary to challenge the neither-confirm-nor-deny rule by requesting a statement from America.

Some New Zealand sources claim that progress was being made along these lines and that what wrecked the effort was the untimely leaking to the press of a letter from the Australian Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, to Lange. While the letter was couched in moderate and polite terms, the fact that it expressed disagreement with New Zealand's policy at all caused a surge of nationalist resentment in New Zealand, which ruled out any modification of the ban.

It is certainly true that the leaking of Hawke's letter, on the eve of his meeting with Reagan in Washington, complicated matters, but given the strength of feeling in New Zealand generally and in the Labour party in particular, it is difficult to see how there could have been compromise in any case. Lange's economic policies, which involved a Reagan-like commitment to scrapping protectionism and limiting government intervention, were already unpopular with the Left and were only tolerated on the basis of a firm stand on the nuclear-ships issue.

At the beginning of 1985, after seven months, the U.S. finally put the matter to the test by requesting that the U.S.S. *Buchanan*, a conventionally-powered destroyer, be allowed to visit. The request was refused.

The American reaction was swift and sharp. Washington announced that while New Zealand was still a friend, it could no longer be considered an ally. ANZUS as a tripartite alliance was declared inoperative as long as the ban continued. New Zealand's access to high-grade American intelligence was abruptly cut off (hitherto, together with Australia, New Zealand had enjoyed access unmatched by any NATO country, other than Britain and Canada). Military exercises involving joint participation by the U.S. and New Zealand, exercises highly valued by the New Zealand services, were cancelled. The ANZUS Council meeting scheduled to be held in Canberra later in the year was indefinitely postponed—again a significant act, as the annual meeting of the Council is the most important fixed item on the New Zealand and Australian diplomatic calendars. While the U.S. announced that there would be no economic retaliation against New Zealand, it also indicated that, in the circumstances, the Reagan administration would find it hard to continue going to Congress to plead for special treatment for New Zealand as a valued ally—a matter of considerable interest to New Zealand, as the U.S. is the third largest market for its exports, and it has enjoyed special privileges until now. In fact, New Zealand has subsequently lost its immunity from the application of the "injury test" to its subsidized exports to the U.S.

In adopting all these measures, Washington took care to emphasize that bilateral ties between the U.S. and Australia were in no way impaired and that relations between the two countries remained excellent. To underscore the point, it was announced that Secretary of State George P. Shultz would visit the Australian capital in July, at the time the ANZUS Council meeting would normally have taken place.

Nevertheless, the whole episode has been extremely difficult and embarrassing for Australia. The Hawke Labor government is firmly committed to the ANZUS alliance, to maintaining the jointly controlled U.S. intelligence facilities, and to U.S.-ship visits. Hawke has made clear that he gives overriding priority to safeguarding Australia's relationship with America. In this he undoubtedly has the support of most Australians. At the same time he has had to keep two things very much in mind. First, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that Australia's relationship with New Zealand is a hallowed one and, whatever the difference on policy, any suggestion of deserting New Zealand, or of bullying it into submission, would meet strong resistance. Second, the Australian Labor party, as opposed to the government, is far from solid on the issue. It contains a large and powerful left-wing faction, one which controls 44 votes out of 99 in the annual conference of the party and which is opposed not only to ship visits but to ANZUS itself.

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This faction regards the anti-Communist (and pro-Israel) Hawke as an enemy to be destroyed rather than as a leader to be supported. It has its representatives in the Cabinet and the support of two minority parties (the Australian Democrats and the Nuclear Disarmament party which between them polled 15 percent of the vote in recent Senate elections); of an anti-nuclear movement which put 300,000 people in the streets in March of this year; of a large part of the trade-union movement; and, not least, of much of what passes for the quality media in Australia.

For these elements, New Zealand's banning of U.S. ships has been an enormous free gift, accepted with unconcealed joy. It represents an opportunity to attack Hawke and the alliance simultaneously. Hawke has been characterized as bullying toward the New Zealanders and servile toward Washington. As far as ANZUS is concerned, the more sophisticated line is to argue for its "demystification" and fragmentation. An overall mutual-defense pact, it is argued, is really unnecessary; a series of discrete agreements dealing with particular aspects of the relationship would be better. This, one sympathetic journalist explains, will mean that "each element of the U.S. relationship can be considered separately without the cry going up that it is undermining ANZUS"—as neat a statement of the Stalinist "salami tactic" for destroying an enemy as one could hope to see.

Under these sorts of pressures, and faced with the need to keep on good terms with two allies who are themselves on bad terms, Hawke has felt that caution and prudence are the better part of valor. He may be wrong. In the immediate aftermath of the U.S.S. *Buchanan* decision, he thought it necessary to guard his flanks by withdrawing permission for U.S. aircraft to use Australian airfields during the MX testing in the Pacific, a decision which projected weakness, was unpopular in the country as a whole, and for which he got no credit from the Left. Since then he has played it carefully down the middle, firmly reaffirming the commitment to the U.S. alliance but being forthcoming with help to New Zealand to overcome some of the consequences of its own action.

This is an understandable reaction, but it is hardly statesmanship. There has been no attempt to give a lead to resolve the crisis, no willingness to commit Hawke's considerable prestige and negotiating skills, no attempt to take the matter to the people and to confront the Left's case head-on. Instead, policy has been reactive, determined mainly by domestic political considerations. Whether such an approach will be adequate to prevent the destruction of ANZUS remains to be seen. Certainly the situation in Australia is a matter for deep concern from America's point of view, and it would be a serious mistake to assume that, while things have gone wrong in New Zealand, the future of Australia's attitude is not in doubt.

FORMALLY and precisely, ANZUS is a security treaty, signed in 1951 by Australia, New Zealand, and the U.S., declaring that an armed attack on any of the three countries in "the Pacific Area" (left undefined) would be dangerous to the peace and safety of them all, and undertaking to collaborate in developing their collective capability to resist attack. In practice, ANZUS has come to be synonymous with the total political-strategic relationship among the three countries, as it has been fleshed out over the years.

A strong case can be made that of all the alliances entered into by the United States since World War II, ANZUS is easily the most cost-effective. Consider first the costs. The main one for the U.S. is that, in effect, the alliance extends the American security umbrella over the Antipodes ("in effect" because, strictly, the treaty does not commit each of the parties to do more than "meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional process"). For Australia and New Zealand this means (or has meant until recently) that the alliance constitutes a highly valued insurance policy. But for the U.S. it is in the nature of a bookkeeping entry rather than a real cost. For its two alliance partners suffer from no credible military threat, and short of a global conflict—which would involve the U.S. in any case—it is difficult to see such a threat emerging in the foreseeable future. That apart, the Guam (or Nixon) Doctrine suggests that in the event of any conflict not involving a major power —say a dispute with Indonesia—the U.S. would stand apart and expect Australia and New Zealand to deal with their own problem.

This was, in fact, the view taken by the Kennedy administration in the early 1960's—*before* the declaration at Guam—when Australia was at odds with Sukarno's Indonesia over West Irian; America's wider concern to keep on good terms with a large Third World country, which was in danger of falling under Communist control at the time, was given precedence over the ANZUS commitment. Circumstances, of course, can change rapidly and in ways that confound expectations, but as of now, the U.S. commitment to the defense of its two allies is both nominal, in that there is no credible threat, and highly qualified.

Nor does the alliance carry many other costs. Australia and New Zealand, almost uniquely among America's allies, have never asked for nor received any American aid. Unlike other important alliances, ANZUS does not entail the stationing of large numbers of American forces in close proximity to potential enemies nor, indeed, the deployment of significant American forces in any way other than would anyhow be required by American interests. Apart from the security guarantee, the major benefits of ANZUS to America's alliance partners have been privileged access to American intelligence, the purchase of American military equipment and technology on favorable terms, the opportunity to exercise with U.S. armed

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forces, and cooperation on defense-science matters. While these are highly valued by the recipients, none has meant significant costs to the U.S.

On the other hand, the benefits flowing to the U.S. from the alliance are considerable. Until now —and please supply this phrase whenever applicable from here on—ANZUS has provided a stable, reliable alliance with two like-minded democracies, in a part of the world which is strategically important to the U.S. and in which such allies are otherwise hard to find. In Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand have been almost uniformly supportive of U.S. aims and policies. They joined the American-inspired Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO); they gave political and military support in Vietnam (when no other Western country was offering either); they took part in the containment of Communism in Malaysia and still keep a military presence on the peninsula; through the Colombo Plan they strengthened links between the emerging elites of the region and the West by providing education for thousands of Asian students; and, per capita, they have accepted more Vietnamese refugees than any other country. Because of their standing in and understanding of the region, they have often been able to act as valuable intermediaries on America's behalf, interpreting, defending, and sponsoring its policies more effectively than the U.S. itself would have been able to do, in a region where anti-Americanism is not unknown and where many are nervous about too close an association with superpowers.

In the Southwest Pacific, Australia and New Zealand have taken primary responsibility—until recently, with conspicuous success—for the security and development of the minute and very vulnerable island states, which are the outstanding political feature of the area. That this area does not receive much attention is due not to the fact that it is intrinsically unimportant (in terms of a struggle for naval supremacy in the Pacific it is potentially very important indeed) but to the fact that the strategy pursued by Australia and New Zealand of denying the Soviet Union a toehold there has so far succeeded. Dealing with these micro- and mini-states requires a very delicate touch—a feel for the cultures involved, close personal contacts, and a fine sense of how much is enough; again it is doubtful whether the U.S. could do the job anything like as well as its ANZUS allies.

Even outside the treaty area, ANZUS brings important benefits to America. Australia and New Zealand are participants in the Multilateral Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai as they have been participants in earlier peacekeeping operations in the Middle East, largely because of their responsiveness to an American appeal. Since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Australia has supplemented and supported the American surveillance of the Indian Ocean, providing staging facilities for B-52's in northern Australia and port facilities in Western Australia, as well as taking over extensive surveillance duties of its own (reportedly for the whole area south of the equator). In the UN, Australia and New Zealand have often been among the very small group which has regularly voted with the U.S. on contentious issues, including those involving Israel. For two countries living in a predominantly "Southern" or Third World environment, that support has not been without its costs.

There is one other major benefit to the U.S., one little known in America but which may in fact be the most important of all. Australia houses a range of American intelligence facilities of exceptional significance, particularly those located at the Pine Gap, Nurrungar, and North West Cape bases. The precise functions of these facilities are highly secret but James Bamford, the American specialist on satellite intelligence, says that they are "America's most important defense satellite earth stations" and in the view of Paul Wolfowitz, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, they are "critical."

In a statement to the Australian Parliament in June 1984, Prime Minister Hawke maintained in measured terms that because of the role played by these facilities, Australia's contribution to arms control and strategic stability "will remain something more than modest. We contribute positively to verification and stable and effective deterrence." According to the best available information, the functions of these bases include early warning, targeting information, the command and control of ballistic-missile submarines, and the processing of very sensitive signal intelligence. The same sources maintain that, while it will be possible (at a very great cost) to replace these facilities in a few years, as of now there is no substitute for them.

In terms of intelligence, then, it would seem that the U.S. gets even better than it gives to its ANZUS partners. Moreover, while the access to intelligence the U.S. provides to Australia involves little in the way of cost, the facilities it enjoys are strategically and politically expensive for Australia. They almost certainly give Australia a much more prominent and uncomfortable place on the Soviet's nuclear-targeting list than it would otherwise have; partly because of this, and partly because of the questions relating to sovereignty, the presence of the facilities is a very contentious issue in Australian politics (contentious enough for it to have been necessary to establish some form of "joint control" over their operation).

In view of the current travail, one last point deserves to be made in listing the benefits of ANZUS to the U.S. Until a year ago it was certainly the most harmonious and trouble-free of all America's alliances, one firmly based on compatible interests, shared values, and, not least, a com-

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mitment by the members to civility in dealing with one another. It has been a relationship which has caused America virtually no political embarrassment. When its ANZUS partners have been unable to agree with U.S. policy—as, for example, during the Suez Crisis in 1956 and the West Irian dispute—they (unlike many other allies) have expressed their disagreement in moderate terms and usually in private.

In view of all this it is clear that ANZUS —and particularly its Australian component—is an important alliance for the U.S., both intrinsically and in cost-benefit terms. Indications are that America's need for it is going to increase rather than diminish in the near future, for there are clear signs of imminent deterioration in the strategic situation in the Southeast Asia-Southwest Pacific area. Since the fall of Saigon ten years ago, Americans have tended, for understandable reasons, to turn away from this region. But its strategic importance remains what it was, and events have not come to a standstill because America's attention has shifted.

In the ten years following the fall of South Vietnam, two more of the much derided dominoes have toppled and the whole of Indochina is now under Vietnamese control. A third domino—Thailand—has recently had Vietnamese soldiers fighting on its soil and the conditions exist for Hanoi to escalate its conflict with this country at any time it chooses. The Vietnamese conquest of its neighbors has been and is lavishly funded by the Soviet Union, which in return has acquired a base in Cam Ranh Bay astride the sea routes between the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia on the one hand, and Northeast Asia on the other. It facilitates the ability of the Soviet Pacific fleet, which is now the Soviet's largest, to maintain a presence both in the South Pacific and the Indian Ocean. But perhaps the most salient thing about Cam Ranh Bay is its symbolic significance: what a little over a decade ago was a major American base is now in Soviet hands and is, according to Secretary Shultz, "now the center of the largest concentration of Soviet naval units outside the USSR."

Immediately facing Cam Ranh Bay, across the South China Sea, the Philippines are in terrible trouble. It is the familiar story of a friendly, corrupt, and inefficient authoritarian ruler on the skids, while an indigenous Communist movement gathers strength and the availability of a viable democratic alternative to either remains extremely uncertain. If Marcos's rule ends too abruptly, and without sufficient preparation for a democratic replacement, it is likely to leave chaos in its wake; if he hangs on too long, the continuing political and economic deterioration will provide fertile ground for the growth of the already formidable Communist movement.

Familiar as the story is, this particular version is of special significance to the U.S., for two reasons: because of America's unique historic ties with the Philippines and because its bases at Clark Field and Subic Bay are the linchpin of its forward defense strategy in the Pacific. It is by no means unlikely that a situation may develop, sooner rather than later, in which the American government and people will be faced with an excruciating choice: either to involve themselves in "another Vietnam" in the same part of the world, or to reconcile themselves to seeing the reality and the symbolism of Cam Ranh Bay repeated in the case of Clark and Subic.

This does not exhaust the potential for trouble in the region. In the islands of the Southwest Pacific there is one crisis in being, as well as troubling evidence of a growing interest in the region by the Soviet Union and its surrogates. The French territory of New Caledonia is in turmoil. The Melanesian Kanaks (who constitute 44 percent of the 135,000 population) want immediate independence while the Europeans (36 percent) are adamantly opposed to it. The French government, which neglected and mishandled the problem in its earlier stages, has no solution and indeed at this stage it is difficult to envisage one. Among those taking a close interest in the situation is Qaddafi's Libya, which has hosted a group of "Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front" members for military training.

On the other hand, New Caledonia's northern neighbor, Vanuatu (previously the New Hebrides, population 118,000), is being actively courted by Cuba, which sponsored its membership in the Non-Aligned Movement and which has gone to the trouble of acquiring diplomatic accreditation to the island state.

The Soviet Union itself, which has sought access to the region for some years, is set to succeed finally, by entering into a fishing agreement with Kiribati (previously the Gilbert Islands, population 57,000). If this agreement goes through, as seems almost certain, and if the Soviet Union handles things carefully in the early stages, other island states—perhaps Tonga and Tuvalu—will probably be tempted to follow. The prospect of Soviet personnel landing regularly in these minute island states within a year or two—ostensibly for rest, recreation, and servicing purposes—is therefore quite real. It is also extremely worrying, in terms of their obvious vulnerability to manipulation and the staging of coups. (The 1977 coup which, overnight, established a pro-Soviet regime in the Indian Ocean state of Seychelles provides a model.)

These are things that Australia and New Zealand have worked hard to prevent over the years, by the provision of aid, advice, and training. The fact that they may now be failing is due in no small part to the maladroitness of other Western powers, the U.S. as well as France. In particular, an American failure to take into account island sensitivities on fishing rights, and the importance of fish (particularly highly migratory species like tuna) to their economic stability, has caused a

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great deal of friction and ill will toward America. If the Soviet Union does establish a foothold in the region, it will be partly due to a failure by Washington to control the activities of the American Tunaboat Association.

All this may seem to be very small beer, and even as sensible a journal as the London *Economist* recently referred dismissively to "all those dreamy dots in the Pacific." Well, yes, but it is not so long ago that the Caribbean seemed almost equally "dreamy," the home of calypso rather than the source of a threat to American interests. Once a pro-Soviet regime was installed there, perceptions changed utterly.

It is against this broad picture of a troubled region, rather than as an isolated incident down on the bottom right-hand corner of the world map, that the ANZUS crisis must be seen. Depending on how the crisis is handled, ANZUS will either become another and important addition to the lengthening list of problems facing America in the region, or remain what it has been in the past, an effective instrument to help deal with these problems.

But that is to understate the matter. For if the former happens, the consequence will be more than merely the loss of an instrument. To many it will constitute conclusive evidence of the collapse of America's power and influence in the region. For if the U.S. can no longer successfully maintain a longstanding alliance with the region's only two stable democracies, the question will arise: What can the U.S. do?

IF THIS were all there was to the matter, the proper policy for the U.S. would be clear: put up with the New Zealand ban, foolish though it is, and do what is necessary to preserve the alliance, unpalatable though it might be.

But as was indicated at the outset, that is *not* all there is to the matter. Up until now, and despite claims to the contrary by some supporters of New Zealand's new policy, none of America's allies has banned visits by U.S. warships or demanded to know whether they are nuclear-armed as a condition for entry. If New Zealand is allowed to persist in its policy, without suffering severe costs, this will change. A "ripple effect" is not only likely but certain. Anti-nuclear movements will be enormously encouraged and the determination of Western governments to resist them will be diminished—all the more so because the precedent will have been set by such a respectable and loyal friend of America's.

Reports indicate that New Zealand has been discussed more in NATO in the last six months than in the preceding thirty-five years. In Britain the Labour party leader, Neil Kinnock, has already expressed his "full-hearted" agreement with New Zealand's policy, going on to say that the "logic" that his party follows on nuclear weapons is very similar to that being argued by New Zealand's Prime Minister Lange. For good reason, the issue is being watched closely in Japan, a country with a powerful anti-nuclear movement. Until now Japan has finessed the question of visits of nuclear-armed ships by simply not putting the question and assuming that American ships visiting Japanese ports do not carry nuclear weapons. If the issue acquires greater salience, such a way of dealing with the problem is not long likely to prove sustainable.

In discussions of a ripple effect, it is the examples of Western Europe and Japan that have usually been cited. But in terms of what has already been said about the prospects for the Philippines, it is worth considering that case. A post-Marcos government, under pressure from a Communist Left on the issue of the American bases—a very likely scenario—could well find that the New Zealand precedent offered an attractive way of solving its problem. Even if the Philippines did not spontaneously adopt the New Zealand model, there would certainly be pressure for it to do so. After all, if a charter member of the Western alliance had already set a precedent and got away with it, why not the Philippines?

The Soviet Union has tracked what Tass calls "the New Zealand phenomenon" closely from the beginning. On the first day after the election of the Lange government, Radio Moscow thoughtfully observed in its broadcast to the Pacific that "implementation of New Zealand Labour's election pledges might set off a chain reaction leading to the collapse of the ANZUS bloc." As the crisis has developed, so has the prominence of Soviet press coverage—even to the extent of a cartoon on the front page of *Pravda*—with the two themes of the collapse of ANZUS and the spread of "nuclear allergy" being given equal emphasis.

Soviet interest has not been restricted to press coverage. Earlier this year, Lange felt it necessary to call in the Soviet ambassador to tell him to mind his own business and not to interfere in New Zealand's affairs—a sensitive matter, since the ambassador's predecessor, identified as a KGB agent by British intelligence, was expelled in 1980 after being caught in the act of passing a large sum of money to the pro-Soviet Socialist Unity party. At the same time, Australian fears are also being played upon in the crudest fashion. A visiting Soviet official recently assured Australians that if their country broke with the U.S. and removed the joint intelligence facilities, Soviet armed forces would not target Australia with nuclear weapons.

There is no doubt that, in the wake of the New Zealand ban, breaking the ANZUS alliance is a serious Soviet aim, and there is no ground for complacency regarding its chances of success. Neither is there any doubt that, if New Zealand succeeds in having its cake and eating it too on this matter, the flow-on effect will create serious problems for American foreign and defense policies in a variety of other places.

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So far, the Reagan administration has handled the issue extremely well, finding the right balance of patience and firmness. It has understood that the proper target for its efforts is not the dedicated members of the anti-nuclear movement in New Zealand and Australia, who are irreconcilable and usually anti-American. Nor is it the governments of the two countries, whose freedom of maneuver is severely limited by domestic political factors. It is rather the people of Australia and New Zealand. Over the years the great majority of these has steadfastly supported the alliance. In recent times disturbing numbers of them have begun to change their minds on the nuclear issue. Apart from natural abhorrence toward nuclear weapons, they have changed because they have heard the anti-nuclear case presented with increasing frequency and with much more conviction and passion than the opposing case, whose supporters have become defensive and half-hearted. Nor have most Australians and New Zealanders been made clearly aware that the changes they are being exhorted to endorse carry substantial costs.

Until this trend is reversed and diffuse popular support for anti-nuclear policies diminishes, appeals to the New Zealand government to alter its policies are likely to be futile and expectations of resolute action by the Australian government to be disappointed. A new course cannot be brought about by clever diplomacy. It can only be done openly—by argument, persuasion, and action—and it must be done with sufficient force to convey the message clearly and with sufficient sensitivity to ensure that the hard-core anti-nuclear elements are given as little as possible to exploit in the way of aggrieved nationalism.

Whether by luck, accident, or clear design, American policy has substantially met these tests. It has proceeded in the spirit not of breaking an adversary but of persuading friendly peoples, and of emphasizing the necessary cost of the course they have adopted. Patience has been exercised—an initial seven-month wait before putting the issue to a test—and when action has been taken it has been carefully measured to indicate the gravity of the situation without being unnecessarily inflammatory. Charges of bullying and lack of respect for the sovereignty of very sensitive nations have, of course, been made by the anti-American/anti-nuclear people, but one suspects that they have not carried the conviction nor aroused the emotions that were hoped for.

Wolfowitz and others have put the American case with intelligence and restraint. They have argued that the cause of peace is not served by the weakening of the deterrent capability of the strongest democracy, nor the cause of arms control by setting an example that only encourages potential adversaries to wait things out for further signs of unilateralism and anti-nuclear sentiment in the West. They have pointed out that what is required in order to make sense of the New Zealand claim (that while they renounce nuclear weapons they remain allies in good standing) is not possible. As Wolfowitz put it in his congressional testimony: "We have only one navy—not one conventionally-capable navy and one nuclear-capable navy; not one navy to accommodate one country's policy and another navy for the rest of the world." They have insisted that the alliance cannot be sustained practically or politically without fair burden-sharing, that no U.S. government can obligate its men and women to the defense of a country that does not welcome those men and women and will not let American ships into their ports. They have shown full respect for New Zealand's sovereignty, for its right to determine its own policy, but they have insisted, unanswerably, that the U.S., too, as a sovereign nation, has an equal right to determine how to adjust its own policies to meet the changed situation thus created. Most important of all, they have brought home the necessity for choice on the part of New Zealanders: the alliance or the ban.

These arguments, together with the actions taken following the U.S.S. *Buchanan* episode, have had some effect. Last year when an opinion poll simply put the question of support or opposition to the banning of ships, 58 percent were in favor and only 30 percent against. But when, after the *Buchanan*, the question was put in terms of support for the ban even if it means the end of ANZUS, the result was 45 percent for, 45 percent against.

Nevertheless there is still a long way to go. An important part of the problem is that in making its case the U.S. is dependent largely on media which, in Australia at least, are at worst hostile and at best skeptical. Consideration should be given to overcoming this by setting out a comprehensive and forceful statement of the American case and making it freely, widely, and directly available to the general public in Australia and New Zealand.

To say that the right policy of patience and firmness is being pursued, and that the essential thing is not to deviate from it in the direction of either impatience or compromise, is not an exciting conclusion. It will not satisfy everyone in an America which is tired of being taken for granted and misrepresented. But too much is at stake merely to indulge a desire for decisiveness. Recent American experience has demonstrated that an incremental approach is not the right one in dealing with a fanatical enemy, but there is much to be said for such an approach in dealing with a mistaken friend. In the last resort more drastic action may be necessary; but one should treat the last resort as exactly that.

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Is Caravaggio Our Contemporary?

James Gardner

To a degree unparalleled in the artists of the Old Master tradition, Caravaggio would appear to have preserved through four centuries the power to awaken in us the kind of interest that we can ordinarily summon only in respect to our contemporaries. To some he would even seem an emissary of our times sent back into the benighted years of Counter-Reformation Europe, overturning accepted orthodoxies and championing such modern predilections as inverted sexuality and the common man. In the recent exhibition of his paintings at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, there was a well-known depiction of the myth of Narcissus in which that ill-starred youth gazes amorously into a pond of standing water. And like the boy of that myth, when the visitors who pressed through the doors of the Metropolitan came upon the works of Caravaggio, they were startled to discover everywhere images of themselves, and they were enchanted by this reflection.

If the word "enchanted" seems somehow too pallid for the violence which we ordinarily associate with Caravaggio, nevertheless it is appropriate, for we are not really alarmed by him—though we may expect that others will be—and to the extent that he continues to administer a shock it is apt to be of the refreshing and invigorating, rather than the mortal, kind. Furthermore, it is a fair guess that each visitor to the Metropolitan show (which closed in mid-April) experienced at some point during his inspection, and at whatever depths of his spirit, the faintest thrill of self-satisfaction, in the knowledge that he was ever so slightly more enlightened than those stuffed shirts whom Caravaggio once made sick to their stomachs.

But the exhibition at the Metropolitan did not pass entirely without the stirrings of a remoter controversy, even if these were confined to the secular theologians of art criticism and historiography. If the present generation delights to read its own reflection in these paintings, each critic and each scholar seemed equally delighted to discern in Caravaggio's martyred saints and still-lifes a little reflection of himself. Those critics of Marxist inclination—to judge by the reviews, they were easily in the majority—found in Caravaggio's unadorned and anti-aristocratic saints something of the fervor of Leninism, while the more anarchically disposed recognized in his belligerently anti-social behavior a sympathetic consonance with Marcel Duchamp and Prince Kropotkin.

Among the advocates of pure form, by contrast, the influence of Clement Greenberg was plain. The painter Frank Stella, in an access either of merriment or of madness, wrote (in the New York *Times Magazine*) that Caravaggio was the first post-abstract expressionist, whose formal explorations were unexpectedly proximate to what Stella himself has evidenced in his most recent work. As for those critics who champion realist painting, and who have welcomed the return of the figure and of accurate representation (in the wake, precisely, of artists like Frank Stella), they too clearly perceived something of their own struggle in Caravaggio's divergence from the enfeebled mannerism of his teachers. To all of these there may finally be added the view of Caravaggio as a brilliant and bold exponent of a tradition which he extended rather than undermined, and which sadly is now past beyond recall; such is the view—which may be left to others to characterize—that informs the present essay.

But the Caravaggio who drew the crowds, and who left them feeling that they had gotten what they came for, was the Caravaggio of legend. For his life was so full of curious and romantic incident that one could almost cherish his memory for that alone, without ever aspiring to a disinterested appraisal of his art.

The legendary quality that unmistakably stamps Caravaggio's career has flourished in the obscurity that surrounds and at times engulfs whole portions of his life. The date of his birth, for instance, will probably always remain the subject of scholarly dispute, though it may be placed with confidence between 1570 and 1575. The social position into which he was born is also somewhat uncertain, though the name of his family, Amerighi, was one of the more illustrious of the local gentry. The late Walter Friedlaender, perhaps the preeminent expert on

James Gardner, here making his first appearance in Commentary, is a young critic who has written for *Art News* and the *New Criterion*.

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the subject, describes him as coming from "a moderately well-to-do family of artisans," but his biographer and contemporary Giulio Mancini writes that his father was master builder to the marquis of Caravaggio, the town where both his parents had been born and from which he would take his name, though he himself was born in Milan and spent only part of his childhood in Caravaggio.

In 1584 he returned to Milan to enter the studio of Simone Peterzano, with whom he would remain for four years before a quarrel with his master sent him on his way to Rome. Upon arriving in that city, after several years of unrecorded wanderings, he was reported to be living under the aegis of Pandolfo Pucci, a religious painter from Recanati. He went on to do some hack work for the artist Anteveduto Grammatica, before entering the studio of the Cavaliere d'Arpino in 1595. But due to a serious illness he left after only eight months. Then, providentially, in the abjectness of the hospital ward, his work was brought to the attention of the wealthy collector Cardinal del Monte, in whose house he would reside for the next five years.

By this time his career had hit its stride, and he was working continuously and successfully. But starting around this period of his life, the principal documents concerning Caravaggio come to us from the law courts. In 1604 he was accused of assault after throwing artichokes in the face of a waiter whom he had first insulted. A little while later he was to be found in prison for throwing stones; no sooner was he released than he was once again in trouble with the law, this time for offending an officer. Six months later he was incarcerated for carrying illegal weapons, and less than ten months after his release he had grievously insulted a mother and her daughter.

At this point the life of Caravaggio, seen from a distance of four centuries, reduces itself to a monotonous gridwork of transgressions. Only nine days after his previous malefaction, we learn from one document, Caravaggio's mistress, whose name was Lena, was insulted by a notary, and it would appear that Caravaggio was as always swift to descend upon him. For this he had suddenly to flee to Genoa; when he returned after a month, he learned that his furniture had been confiscated by his landlady, for his rent was six months in arrears. Next we hear of him explaining to an incredulous judge that wounds he had received, and which he could not conceal, were the result of falling on his own sword.

The turning point in Caravaggio's life came in 1606, when he killed another human being. This man was Ranuccio Tommasoni, and the apparent cause was a wager they had made over a game of tennis. In the fray Caravaggio was himself wounded, and now was forced to leave Rome for good. He settled in Naples, but spent scarcely a year in that city before moving to Malta, where, in return for painting at least one portrait of the grand master of the Knights of Malta, he was made one of their order, a distinction which, according to the art historian Howard Hibbard, he had eagerly sought, for it would confirm his aristocratic descent.

Though it might be expected that this conferring of a new dignity would civilize him slightly, we learn that only a few months after his elevation he escaped to Messina from the impregnable fortresses of Malta, where he had been held for insulting another knight of the order. Toward the end of his biography of Caravaggio, Giovanni Baglione, his generally veracious disciple and subsequent rival, reports that he returned to Naples, where he was met by some of his old enemies who apparently wounded him so severely in the face "that on account of the blows he was almost no longer recognizable." Despairing of revenge, he packed his belongings into a bag and made for Rome, where he was immediately incarcerated for two days, ironically for a crime of which he was actually innocent. For a few days thereafter he continued his journey on foot, before succumbing, on July 18, 1610, to a fatal fever upon the beaches of Port-Ercole.

To affix origins to movements and currents is generally more difficult in the case of Old Masters than it is with more recent art, but usually it is comfortably supposed that with the sack of Rome in 1527 by the victorious armies of Spain, a deep confusion and despair settled upon the psyche of Italian art, and that as a result of this, the sturdy and naturalistic humanism of the High Renaissance began to be overtaken by that amorphous movement known as mannerism. Under the influence of this movement the proportions of the human figure presently dwindle into a nervous attenuation, while the sensible coloring found in the works of earlier masters yields to a willful perversion of nature. In the works of painters like Domenico Beccafumi and Rosso Fiorentino, solid local colors like green and mauve are placed in dazzling and irrational contrast with the palest yellows and deepest scarlets. The studious reconstruction of the real world that had been made possible by linear perspective, a tool which the Florentines of a hundred years earlier believed they had reclaimed from the antique world but which in fact surpassed anything that preceded them, now of a sudden collapses into a claustrophobic flatness, or twists into serpentine spirals. In Rosso's *Deposition*, for example, the figures are seen squirming about in an almost voluptuous agony, as though sidling along the thin airless space between the back of the painting and the plane through which the viewer looks, like the last stirrings of butterflies pressed beneath glass.

As the mannerist movement advances to Venice and Milan, and down into the south, the cherished humanist conception of man's centrality in the universe is dealt a decisive blow which will leave it altered forever after, and the divine endowment

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of reason is judged finally to have been overthrown before the supreme mystery of Christ's passion. As Spain secures its hold in the Italian peninsula, the Papacy in Rome acquires a primacy which previously it had never enjoyed, but the price it must pay for this is the growing influence of the Spanish court and the exorbitant Inquisition. Soon it formally promulgates its own anti-humanist doctrine in the grand Third Session of the Council of Trent. From now on, the strictest propriety is to be observed in the depiction of religious personages; doctrine and Scripture must be followed closely; and so as not to incite viewers to licentious thoughts, all figures must be clothed in a seemly manner. Daniele da Volterra is called upon to cover the unsightly nakedness of the figures of Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*, and this only after the most urgent demonstrations on the part of concerned citizens can dissuade the authorities from destroying the whole work. Under the stern influence of the Jesuits, the sculptor Bartolomeo Ammanati, for the salvation of his soul, is moved publicly to repent of all the naked forms he has brought into the world. And the great Venetian master Paolo Veronese is forced by the Inquisition to suppress all the extraneous details he had lavished upon his depiction of the *Feast in the House of Levi*. The result is not that the figures in contemporary paintings become less mannered, either in the space they inhabit or in the forms they assume, but that they tend to be more decently dressed, and to be pressed into a more punctilious conformity with Church doctrine.

But it happens toward the end of the century, just as Caravaggio enters the studio of Simone Peterzano in Milan, that the College of Cardinals elects to the Papacy the prelate who will become Sixtus V, and he, together with Clement VIII in the following decade, will lay the foundations for the "*Roma barocca*" that grows to its fullest flowering in the next century. One of the tendencies that now manifests itself in Italian art, instrumental in the formation of that "realism" for which Caravaggio would become famous, is the so-called anti-mannerism of Santi di Tito and his followers. The figures in these paintings are now endowed with a new sense of solidity, and the earth once more exercises its gravitational pull upon the no-longer volatile forms. Though traces of the old mannerism remain even in these late paintings, and the movement in fact extends well into the 17th century, a new sobriety and high seriousness now reenter painting, and what survives from mannerism in this modified state is only what will serve the purposes of the reformers. And something of this spirit Caravaggio will have found in the paintings of Peterzano.

But this is probably not the only influence that Peterzano would have upon him, nor the only one that would be important in the evolution of his style. Indeed, it is essential to consider—and perhaps the principal strength of the Metropolitan show lay in aiding in such a consideration—that the famous Caravaggio idiom was not born in a vacuum, in flagrant contravention of what preceded it, but rather was in the main an inspired synthesis of various earlier tendencies, impelled, to be sure, by Caravaggio's explosive spirit.

Since we cannot be certain whether Caravaggio ever visited Venice, it may be to Peterzano, who claimed to be Titian's last student, that we must attribute the Venetian motifs that turn up not infrequently in his work. From Peterzano's earlier period Caravaggio would have had the chance to admire, if in a watered-down version, the gold tonalities emerging from a dark, suggestive background characteristic of the later Titian. And in other, maturer works of Peterzano he would have encountered another kind of background, as deeply and as preemptively black as anything he himself would later attempt. For what was new in Caravaggio was not so much his use of chiaroscuro, that interplay of light and shadow, as his application of it, which was more consistent than had been seen before. When the arch-mannerist Federico Zuccaro first set eyes upon the *Calling of St. Matthew*, Caravaggio's first truly important use of the chiaroscuro technique, he commented dismissively that it was really nothing more than a rehashing of Giorgione, the early 16th-century Venetian master. But the artists closest to Caravaggio in their use of chiaroscuro were really Antonio and Vicenzo Campi of Cremona. Where the technique had heretofore been applied primarily to peaceful night-scenes and nativities, in the work of these two masters there was introduced a sense of energetic action, combined with a realistic setting of the stage upon which the naturalistic figures perform.

Other features of Caravaggio's paintings that have become identified with him are his graphic realism, his preference for humbler types, and his fondness for depicting violent acts. Here again, however, he is more conspicuous for the frequency with which he resorts to such features than for any legitimate claim he might make to their invention. For abundant examples of the use of humbler types, for instance, we have only to go to the works of the Venetian, Jacopo Bassano, in which we find definitive prototypes for protruding backsides and the begrimed soles of peasants' feet.

True, Bassano is far more of a mannerist than Caravaggio, and in his gorgeously intricate compositions he renders these humbler specimens of humanity with a sweetness with which the later artist would have had little sympathy, and a grace that would seem at any moment to etherealize them to a point no longer compatible with reality. Where, then, might Caravaggio have found a model for the sort of realism that interested him? In addition to the artists of the "reforming" school, like his first teacher, he may also have profited from studying the works of Girolamo Savoldo of Bergamo, whose figures are rendered

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with a precise and almost tactile plausibility, and also reveal a tendency to emphasize the humbler side of life. Still, like most other artists of the time, Savoldo seems content never to disrupt the relative stasis of his compositions, and the figures in his paintings appear content merely to pause and wonder rather than to commit themselves to any action, let alone a brutal and violent one.

For this last ingredient, so essential to Caravaggio's work especially after 1600, we must look elsewhere. Mannerist painters in general took a greater interest in violence than their predecessors had done. Titian is one good candidate, in works like *Cain Slaying Abel* or his depiction of the myth of Tityus, in which an eagle is seen tearing out a man's liver. As Friedlaender demonstrates, the principal figure-group in one of Caravaggio's most violent works, the *Martyrdom of St. Matthew*, is based upon Titian's *Death of St. Peter Martyr*. And yet Titian is somehow never quite gruesome. For gruesomeness Caravaggio would have done well to look at decapitations by such artists as Callisto Piazza of Brescia, where a headless torso is tilted toward the viewer in such a way that he may, if he wishes, count the veins and arteries and so forth.

Here, then, are most if not all the necessary ingredients for Caravaggio's paintings, and with these in mind we can begin to appreciate them for those qualities of originality and invention they really do possess.

THE earliest extant works of Caravaggio are small easel paintings. These probably antedate his years under the aegis of the Cardinal del Monte and might thus have been suitable for sale upon the streets and in the alleyways of Rome. The works of this period already impress us with a great measure of originality, even if this originality is for the time being slightly in advance of his artistic potential. No painting from this time or from before this time by any other artist looks quite like the unpretentious *Boy Peeling Fruit*, or the slightly later *Fruit-Seller* (although the earlier work seems reminiscent in the facial type and also in the use of chiaroscuro of the Lombardic tradition from which Caravaggio came).

From the earliest writers on Caravaggio up to the present day, his still-life paintings have always been singled our for special praise. In the context of the Italian artists who preceded him, these are the works that were instrumental in establishing his reputation for exacting realism. And yet this sort of painting, in which he clearly excelled, was confined almost exclusively to his early Roman period, after which he appears to have lost interest in it entirely.

Of these early works, still-lifes figure prominently in three—the *Fruit-Seller*, the *Young Bacchus*, and the *Supper at Emmaus*—and constitute the entirety of a fourth, *Basket of Fruit*, in the Ambrosiana Museum in Milan. The finest of these is the still-life in the *Supper at Emmaus*, in which the basket of fruit is placed precariously over the edge of a table as though by some supernatural suspension. We have only to compare the complex interweavings of the wicker basket here with the basket in the *Fruit-Seller*, or the bunching of these grapes with the clumsy agglutinations of the *Young Bacchus*, to see by how much this still-life surpasses the others. The apples and the pear are observed with the minutest accuracy, while the bursting pomegranate, the most fluidly painted of the fruits, seems, in the rhythms of its thick rind and pulp, to distill the very essence of vegetable life. In no other painting by Caravaggio or perhaps by any other Italian is the rich, ponderous clustering of grapes suggested so deliciously as here. Neither the leaves that encincture the head of the *Young Bacchus*, nor the leaves irradiating in all directions from the *Basket of Fruit* in Milan, can equal the leaf a little to the left of the basket in the *Supper at Emmaus*.

The connection that suggests itself between these overripe fruits and the languid young men who traffic in them is one of the aspects of Caravaggio's work which have been taken as evidence of homosexuality. Yet in that period of his career when he is just starting to pass out of this early manner of grace and delicacy, and to reveal the beginnings of a certain austerity, we start to see paintings that are clearly inspired by an appreciation of feminine beauty which is in no way abstracted or diminished by the statuesque nobility he typically imparts to it. The serene evenness of the features of St. Catherine, in a painting where she appears with the instruments of her torment lying all about her, and the troubled beauty of Judith in the act of dispatching Holofernes, the enemy of her people, convey a grandeur in human action fully comparable to that manifested by the great heroines of Shakespeare. And then there is that other great beauty, the Madonna of Loreto, as she appears to two humble pilgrims; here Caravaggio displays the "*contraposto*," or incongruity, that he often likes to indulge in, contrasting the tall and noble carriage of Mary with the bedraggled humility of the suppliant mother and her son. (It has been suggested by Howard Hibbard that the inspiration for this *Madonna*, as well as for most of the other women in Caravaggio's paintings of this period, was his mistress Lena, whom he rose to defend when she was insulted by the notary.)

It was around this time, 1600, that Caravaggio received his first commission for an altarpiece, the one for the Contarelli Chapel. This was to make him famous, and also to establish his reputation as a revolutionary. In the three paintings he did for the altarpiece—the *Calling*, the *Martyrdom*, and the *Inspiration of St. Matthew*—we begin to see that combination of chiaroscuro and violence for which he would forever after be notorious and which is only partially suggested in what he had done before.

The underpinning of all of Caravaggio's earlier

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works had been a rather light tonality, approaching what the Italians might call "*solivo*," from the brightness of the sun. But right around the turn of the century the shadows begin to collect in Caravaggio's paintings, in a process that would be fully realized only in the final, almost subaqueous altarpieces of Malta and Messina. But it is worth remembering that however daring these pictures might be formally, from the point of view of doctrine they were probably a good deal less vexatious to post-Tridentine sensibilities than many of the works of the late mannerist period. For there is surely an implicit chastity in Caravaggio's progression from clutter toward a greater sparseness.

In the first of the Contarelli altarpieces, before a clear smooth wall over which pale brown shadows flit, Matthew is called forth to the service of the Lord from his former life of heathenish dissolution and the pursuit of Mammon. The mystical event takes place before the window of an inn, and it is fairly evenly divided into two groups. The painting is not yet as naturalistic as it might superficially appear. Though the men and boys seated around the table seem to have been transported out of one of Caravaggio's earliest genre scenes, and the frightened young man facing us has arrived from his *Fortune Teller* (in the Louvre), still the figures of Matthew and Christ and the man in front of him are somewhat idealized, and the whole scene is awash in a light of purely supernatural emanation.

THERE are, however, problems: the two groups of figures fit in imperfectly with the background; they do not respond to one another formally in any very interesting fashion; the recession required for the table and those seated there is hesitant and uncertain; and with the two figures at the right it is a little difficult to determine which hands or arms belong to whom. Nevertheless, it is here for the first time that we see such a radical application of genre-scene realism to a sacred subject, and probably no amount of historical perspective can restore to us the shock that this painting once provoked.

The painting that accompanied the *Calling of St. Matthew* in 1600 was a depiction of his martyrdom, actually inspired from several mannerist sources of which not the least is Rosso's *Moses and the Daughters of Jethro*. Movement is generally better served by mannerism than it is by realism, and it is rare at any stage of Caravaggio's development to find as much motion exhibited as here. In a work like Rosso's the individual details are suppressed to yield a more dynamic whole in which all the figures seem caught in a wave of motion sustained throughout the composition. Here, however, Caravaggio is eager to preserve that "real" quality for which he was just then becoming famous. Thus, unwilling to sacrifice any of his painstakingly graphic solidity, he is left to try to generate a plausible sense of motion out of the ten or so semi-autonomous parts. All the figures are brought together in a satisfying manner, and the incorporation of the central motif from Titian's *Death of St. Peter Martyr* is very graceful indeed. But for all its realism, this painting has about it something of a *tableau vivant*: although truly "real," it seems somehow abstracted, as if reality had been mysteriously suspended in its course at the utterance of an incantation.

If these two paintings from the Contarelli Chapel have only partially emerged from their mannerist precedents, in the two paintings that Caravaggio will now do for the Cerasi Chapel we see the emergence of what may be termed his "classical" style. The hesitancies of his earlier works have been resolved, and we have not yet reached the point in his later works where hastiness imparts a certain waywardness to his figures.

The notion of a profound religious experience wholly internalized was not new to Caravaggio, it having been adumbrated in an early depiction of St. Francis. But in that work there is an element of spirituality that is nowhere suggested in the Cerasi *Conversion of Paul*. One of the things that originally stunned the viewers of this painting was the absence of any specific references to the saint; the painting could represent any accidental event that might take place in any stable. One might almost believe that a dream is being represented here, in which the dreamer, through the curious logic of such things, realizes that he is only dreaming and will not be hurt, and so surrenders entirely to his vision. Still, a feeling of gentle but irresistible dawning is present in this painting, and it is a tribute to Caravaggio's artistry as well as to the genuineness of his conviction that he could have captured so effectively the essence of religious experience.

A similar reduction to essence is found in the second painting that he did for the Cerasi Chapel, the *Crucifixion of Peter,* in which the saint is depicted with his feet toward heaven and his head to the ground, as was his wish, so that he might see the heavens opening up before him. The X-shape of the composition imparts to the supine Peter and the cross upon which he lies the diagonal force of a ballistic, and the chiaroscuro is used to great effect, weeding out all that is extraneous without merely blacking it out, as in Caravaggio's later Maltese and Sicilian works.

In the paintings that Caravaggio did for the Contarelli and Cerasi Chapels, then, we find the fullest development of his realism and use of chiaroscuro, and we also see him take one further step out of his earlier sensualism and courtliness toward a growing and deepening religiosity. But before he would surrender to that religious fervor demonstrated in his latest works there remained in him at least one more painting of an aggressive paganism, and this may have been the only work at the Metropolitan exhibition by which anyone was actually and sincerely shocked.

This creation, called *Amor Victorious*, depicts a coarse, nude guttersnipe, to whom the wings of

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angels are affixed; he is lighting upon, and overturning, a table upon which were once arranged all the grandiose accouterments of human glory. Now the implements of war, armor and bay leaves, as well as tomes of deepest learning and instruments of melodious sound, lie scattered across the floor, having yielded to the inexorable power of love. Though the perspective of the musical instruments is slightly awry, still they are beautifully done, and of all the works displayed at the Metropolitan this is perhaps the most perfect. The anatomy and the suggestion of living, breathing flesh are irreproachable. The left hand that the youth conceals behind his back, a device which Caravaggio uses not infrequently when he does not know how to handle or dispose of an extremity that does not serve his purpose, is here employed to quite deliberate, if somewhat unseemly, effect.

But the classicism of which this is so conspicuous an example was actually an extremely brief moment in Caravaggio's creative life, and no sooner does he bring it to perfection than it begins gradually to fall away, resulting finally in the curious and exotic vegetations of his last years in Malta and Messina. The beginnings of this descent are already evident in the renowned *Entombment*, a far more ambitious work than anything he had attempted to date, and continue in what may have been his last Roman work, the famous or infamous *Death of the Virgin*. What so revolted contemporary tastes in this latter painting was the manifest commonness of the Mother of God, who, like all of Caravaggio's dead figures, is shorn even of the mysterious holiness of vitality by being reduced to a corpse in the process of decomposition. The bloatedness of the figure quickly started rumors flying that Caravaggio had used a real corpse as a model, and that it had belonged in life to a prostitute. Though there is an undeniable pathos in this work, in the weeping Magdalene in the foreground and the two men at the bedside hiding their faces in their hands, nevertheless the overall effect is slightly diminished by the perfunctory manner in which all the other figures are bunched together in a scarcely articulated mass. Caravaggio had shown greater care in the individualization of grapes! It is almost as if he were saying, "These people over here are only a crowd; don't look too closely at them." No great artist before Caravaggio had ever suggested such a thing.

After his flight from Rome, Caravaggio still had great works to create, including the *Beheading of John the Baptist* and the *Burial of St. Lucy*. But one work that especially stands out is the *Raising of Lazarus*, which, as Howard Hibbard observes, would appear to derive from a frieze-like composition by Giulio Romano. Caravaggio seems to have taken greater pains here than in most of his late paintings, and the pathos of the scene remains unaffected by the unquestionably willful artificiality of the composition. Christ, with his arm outstretched exactly as in the *Calling of St. Matthew* but from the opposite direction, and the woman who supports the reviving Lazarus, flank and give powerful support to the beautifully developed oval of Lazarus and those around him. There is a grace in this that is most unusual in Caravaggio, and that recalls the consummate delicacy of certain works of Masaccio or the Venetian mannerist Andrea Schiavone.

There is a temptation in discussing the paintings of Caravaggio to attribute the enfeeblement of his last works to some premonition of his death, as if he were already, and prematurely, oppressed by the weight of years. But these latest works were painted when Caravaggio was scarcely older than Titian had been when he painted the Frari *Assumption*, which is seen as the beginning of his artistic life. The weakness of Caravaggio's final works may thus have represented nothing but a lull that would have lasted a year or two. If he had lived out the lifespan of a normal man he might well have gone on to create works of such distinction that everything now surviving would seem mere prologue to what followed.

Still, no one can look upon Caravaggio's two final *Adorations of the Shepherds*, or *Salome Being Brought the Head of John the Baptist*, without feeling that they were done in haste by someone eager to be elsewhere and otherwise engaged. There is no longer much that is very shocking or interesting in them, and the character of the artist, so palpably present in the earlier Roman works, seems to have deserted these icy inventions. We have a new sense of a man mechanically going through the motions of a process that had previously brought him fame. At this point, indeed, Caravaggio comes to resemble those feeble epigones who, after his death, would spring up everywhere in Naples, Malta, and Syracuse.

But it is in these works, too, that we may at last find an explanation of what his contemporaries found so objectionable in Caravaggio when they complained (in the paraphrase of the 17th-century art historian Giovanni Bellori) that "he began to paint according to his own inclinations, not only ignoring but indeed scorning the excellent statuary of antiquity and the famous works of Raphael, asserting that nature alone was the subject for his paintbrush." It is not that these contemporaries were ignorant of the realistic scientific illustrations of Leonardo and Dürer all the way down to Ligozzi, all of whom far surpass Caravaggio in the accuracy of their rendering of nature. What troubled the contemporaries of Caravaggio was neither nature nor nature incorporated into art, but rather an art that was itself antagonistic to the art they knew, and that used nature against art. This was Caravaggio's revolution.

Every square inch of painting that had preceded Caravaggio had had its inspiration in another painting, or in a piece of antique statuary; the greatness of an artist consisted in the skill and originality with which he applied what he had

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inherited. Caravaggio was the first—and even so only partially—to reject, to derail himself from, that system. It is for this that his contemporaries could not forgive him.

The older system had a solution for every problem proposed, but only on condition that one propose the sort of problem for which it had a solution. Though Caravaggio usually asked the old questions, he was radical in seeking answers outside the perfectly self-contained system of art. And even here he might have been forgiven if he had found satisfactory answers. But although he was a great painter, the answers that he devised, the answers that were specifically his own, were not really good ones.

Titian, for example, in his Frari *Assumption*, and Raphael in his *Transfiguration*, could successfully depict a flurry of hands crowding toward a central point while still relying on the "artistic" approach to the creation of art. But Caravaggio, in attempting the same thing in the *Madonna of the Rosary*, is unbelievably clumsy, not because he is not a great artist but because he is seeking in nature the answer to a question that art itself had proposed (namely, how you depict in two dimensions a flurry of hands). In virtually every one of his paintings Caravaggio commits errors in composition, errors in perspective, errors in the depiction of a face or a figure. These errors result from his trying to force an alliance between an artistic system he has not entirely overthrown and another of his own creation founded upon his notions of nature. He is, as a consequence, the first great painter to paint badly. There were many bad painters before him, and many good painters whose good and bad qualities existed side by side in the same works. But Caravaggio is the first in whom the good and the bad derive from the selfsame source and are inseparable; and this, perhaps, is the defining feature of his rebellion.

In this, at least, Caravaggio may be seen as the prototype of many a modern artist in whom powerful intellectual notions precede and at times preempt skillful execution. Nevertheless, although it has lately become fashionable to call Caravaggio our contemporary, I feel that this is a misapprehension: he might have diverged from the older tradition, but he remained a part of it, and this tradition was rejected by us long ago. His passionate religiosity alone would alienate him from all but a few of his modern viewers, and as for his fairly casual endorsement and frequent practice of violence, one certainly hopes that these did not strike a responsive chord among the peaceable art lovers of the Metropolitan. If he may be called our contemporary at all, it is only in the sense that his brilliant if imperfect formal solutions to certain artistic questions continue to reach into the delighted eyes of those who are willing to accept the Old Masters on their own terms.

Caravaggio is unquestionably a great painter—great for his reinvigoration of an enfeebled tradition, for the beautiful details of the still-lifes of his early period, and for the heartfelt and noble pathos that he could call forth at any period of his life. Indeed, when these factors are taken into consideration, to call Caravaggio our contemporary is to do him a disservice. For it is a fair guess that his paintings will continue to exert their power long after the art and the doctrines of our own time are passed over and forgotten.

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The Secret of Mary Gordon's Success

Carol Iannone

Mary Gordon's first novel, *Final Payments* (1978), about the embattled coming of age of an Irish Catholic woman, was both a best-seller and the object of an astonishingly enthusiastic critical response, in which Miss Gordon was compared to Jane Austen and her novel was called a contemporary version of Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist*. Her second novel, *The Company of Women* (1981), also a best-seller, met with a slightly less rapturous but still highly respectful critical reception; Francine du Plessix Gray was typical in hailing Miss Gordon as her generation's "preeminent novelist of Roman Catholic mores and manners." After this novel Miss Gordon announced that she intended to expand her concerns, and indeed her third novel, *Men and Angels*,* is ostensibly not about Catholicism. Except, of course, that it is; only the names have been changed to protect the guilty.

Mary Gordon's background has supplied her with some unique qualifications to write about present-day Catholicism. Her mother, whom she has described simply as "an Irish Catholic working-class girl," was the daughter of Irish and Italian immigrants. Her father, David, a Harvard-educated Jew, had belonged in the 20's to the colony of American expatriates in Paris, where he gradually grew disaffected with modern culture. His sympathy with what his daughter calls "the embarrassing side" in the Spanish Civil War led to his conversion to Catholicism, and a tendency to romanticize the Catholic working class led to his marrying Mary Gordon's mother. While his wife worked as a legal secretary, he made several attempts to found a right-wing Catholic periodical while staying at home to care for their only child (no doubt preparing the ground for Mary's later ardent feminism—she has remarked that for her, feminism comes nearest to Catholicism as an informing framework of values). He died when Mary was only seven, but had by then already begun to teach her Greek, philosophy, and French.

Perhaps partially because of the mixed colors of her personal history, Mary Gordon gradually came to resent her confinement in the Catholic "ghettoes" of Queens and Valley Stream, Long Island, where she attended parochial school through the 12th grade. A docile child—she wrote devout tracts entitled "What Is Prayer?"—she became a rebellious adolescent who once organized a bubble-gum-blowing demonstration to harass the "ignorant" nuns she had come to despise. Her bitter provincial exile ended with a scholarship to Barnard. There Miss Gordon began her advance beyond the pale into the mainstream of American life—which for her, it seems, is entirely, eternally, lyrically Protestant. (Her perception of the ethos formed by the two religions sometimes seems a caricature-in-reverse. For her, Catholics are morbid and intensely self-scrutinizing while Protestants are confident, masterful, disciplined, capable of "a deep unstated sympathy.") It being the turbulent 60's at Columbia, Miss Gordon found more effective ways to protest authority than by blowing bubble gum. She participated in student strikes and sit-ins, and thereby, presumably, gained the social consciousness that filters into some of her work as a liberating alternative to the burdensome demands of Catholic charity.

But Catholicism is not entirely a negative force for Miss Gordon. She has remarked on its profound idealism, and in her novels she depicts a species of Catholic manhood that is fiercely compelling. To her heroines, moreover, she accords a driving passion and qualities of clarity, insight, and penetration that at times can make the Protestants around them seem watery and complacent. Miss Gordon still calls herself a Catholic, or, as she puts it, "I have a real religious life in a framework which I think of as Catholic." But she doubts the Pope would be pleased with her: her views on birth control, abortion, and the ordination of women are unorthodox, and she has observed that "sexy people" leave the Church. On the other hand, her writing evinces a decided scorn for much of the updated Church of post-Vatican II and a certain nostalgia for the consuming seriousness of traditional Catholicism.

In some ways, Mary Gordon's own story, as well as the story she tells in her novels, is one of upward ethnic mobility. But it is a story with a twist: Catholicism, with its insistent ethic of self-renunciation, can make the achievement of worldly success seem not just difficult or forbidding, but positively evil. This tension between the mutually exclusive demands of the sacred and the profane gives Mary Gordon's writing its all-absorbing, almost obsessive intensity, and may well account for the excitement her work has provoked. In a generation of casually pervasive materialism, her protagonists' struggles to break free of the peremptory, otherworldly claims of the Church and to carve out a share of "ordinary human happiness" must seem both deliciously exotic and monumentally heroic. Without the defining element of religion, the resemblance of her novels to the genre known as "women's fiction"

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(in which omnicompetent heroines battle through impossible odds toward inevitable triumph) would no doubt have been more readily discerned.

THIS IS not to suggest that Miss Gordon lacks technical skill; quite the contrary. She can be fabulously descriptive; her tightly packed sentences burst with metaphoric energy; her characters can be large, her situations affecting. Reviewers have praised her for all of this—and have as well cited her flaws, which include overwriting, a tendency to fall back on stereotypes, failure to sustain an overall narrative. But it is clear that they are ultimately impressed with something far greater than technical skill. With Miss Gordon's novels, it seems, they enter the presence of something almost, well, holy. A "painful, powerful transforming book, the monster we have all been waiting for," said the *Christian Science Monitor* of *Final Payments*, while the New York *Times* found *The Company of Women* to be a vision of "integrity," "chastity," "purity, ambition, and grandeur." Miss Gordon's concerns, asserted *Harper's*, are nothing less than "eschatological"; according to *Saturday Review*, she writes about "instinct and reason, submission and authority, the holiness of the flesh, and the awesome power of love to diminish, enrich, and immortalize." And when they are not agreeably dazzled in this manner, Mary Gordon's critics praise her for freeing us from "the false lessons of the past," for dethroning "the mythical nobility of suffering," and for exposing the charity that is really disguised masochism, the morality that is only a cover for hypocrisy.

This, then, with a few emendations and detours, and the determined imposition of feminist ideology, is the substance of the Gordon *oeuvre*: a muscular prohibitive orthodoxy crusades against a sunny mainline permissiveness, while the heroine, who embodies the best of both worlds, is torn between the righteousness of being Catholic and the freedom of being Protestant.

This struggle appears in Miss Gordon's first novel, *Final Payments*, in the form of a revisionist treatise on love and charity. Isabel Moore, Irish-Catholic born and bred, has made a sacrifice unusual for the self-seeking generation to which she belongs but (Miss Gordon implies) typical of the Catholic female with dreams of self-denial. When she was nineteen, her adored father, a widower, an ultra-conservative Catholic, and a professor of medieval literature at a small Catholic college in Queens, had discovered her in bed with his favorite student, and shortly thereafter suffered a stroke. Isabel has cared for him through eleven years of wretched invalidism, both hating and loving her self-imposed martyrdom. The novel opens at his funeral, when she realizes that she must "invent an existence for herself."

Once freed of her burden, Isabel eagerly plunges into the indulgences of the flesh. She sells her house and acquires an I.U.D., then takes on a new job, a new apartment (outside of Catholic Queens), and a couple of lovers (both married, one to a best friend); thirty years of Irish Catholic repression have obviously failed to dim her capacity for the sensual and the sexual. But Isabel soon finds living for the pleasures of this world more than she can bear. The repellent, self-pitying wife of one of her lovers humiliates her and triggers off a terrible episode of guilt and self-condemnation. Isabel determines to return to a life of self-sacrifice. With the willed perversity of the saints who drank the water in which they washed the lepers' feet, she undertakes the care of the aged and impoverished Margaret Casey, a onetime housekeeper for her father and herself.

Margaret is a selfish and sanctimonious woman whom Isabel has always despised but toward whom she still feels an intense obligation. She sets herself the task of learning to love this woman she hates in order to attain the pure, impersonal state of Christian charity. It is a mistake, concludes Isabel, to want to love uniquely and be loved uniquely; better to love "as God loved His creatures, impartially, impervious to their individual natures and thus incapable of being really hurt by them." But soon it becomes obvious to her that such forced sacrifice is itself illegitimate. At novel's end Isabel dispatches her debt to Margaret and resolves to seek a "reasonable life" of ordinary satisfactions.

MARY GORDON once expressed surprise that a novel of "sacrifice and old age" should have been so warmly received as was *Final Payments*—as if the esoteric ethic of self-renunciation were not this author's chief appeal. But "sacrifice and old age" are in any event only half the message of *Final Payments*. The other half is a treatise on how to overcome guilt, cut loose from life's losers, and buckle down to enjoying "the cares of this world" as soon as possible. Thus, much of the book is devoted to Miss Gordon's improvements on traditional morality. When Isabel commits adultery she suffers a sharp backlash of guilt, but the book reminds us that this "sin" breaks up a stagnant marriage and frees one of life's winners from one of its congenital losers. ("I was never any match for her, with all her deprivations," the defecting husband declares of his whining martyr of a wife.) In Isabel's job as a social worker (investigating home care for the aged), she comes across an old woman ready to commit suicide because of her need for particular love rather than the "generalized charity" she receives; Isabel does not hesitate to help her end her life, once again with the novel's quietly defiant endorsement.

It is here, in the dichotomy between the need for personal affection and the Catholic exhortation to universal love, that Miss Gordon repeatedly focuses her moral attention. But she has stacked the deck. Universal, unconditional love is for her largely the love of and for losers. People love God and seek to be loved in Him mostly because they are tired or defeated or because "their bodies . . . had not given them sufficient pleasure." These losers not only lack the courage to risk human love but never had much to recommend them to begin with—no beauty, grace, intelligence, humor, or sensuality, especially no sensuality. (Other models of loser-spirituality

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include Isabel's father, fanatical and often hateful, and Father Mulcahy, her pastor, loving and loyal but somewhat beside the point. The men of Isabel's choice love "conditionally.")

Personal human love is for the winners—for those with all the assets plus the guts to ask to be loved for themselves alone and "not for what we share with the rest of the human race." But once you admit your need for such love, you are vulnerable; "there was nothing worth living for once you lost it." Hence Isabel's sympathy for the old woman's desire to commit suicide. Life is "monstrous" in its "randomness" as to who gets the good stuff, and in its precariousness as to who gets to keep it, but there you have it; the winners accept the terms.

The problem is that Catholicism asks the contenders to care for the rejects. How to quiet this nagging demand with minimal energy and still stay on the fast track—that is the question that haunts Isabel, who recognizes, correctly, that the charity and sacrifice being demanded cannot be accomplished through a simple act of the will (she does not surmise that it can be achieved through grace). And so she rejects her parochial-school lessons—"Love is measured by sacrifice," and "Charity suffereth long and is kind"—in favor of something much simpler:

> Margaret's life would be more bearable if she did not have to worry about money. And I had money, money from the sale of the house. It occurred to me, simply, that I could give up my money; I did not have to give up my life.

By signing over her entire bank account to Margaret, making her "final payment," Isabel is freed from pointless self-sacrifice and can begin her own life anew: "It was all the money I had in the world. But I was free of Margaret now, and I felt weightless. . . . There was nothing left between us. Margaret could not touch me now."

It seems awkward to have to remind such a self-reflective writer as Mary Gordon that in the very same chapter of I Corinthians from which she draws the title of her third book, *Men and Angels*, Paul gives a clear warning against precisely this kind of giving: "though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor . . . and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." But Miss Gordon, who so arranges her moral landscape as to make *any* impulse toward transcendent love seem deluded, aims of course precisely to dismantle charity in its Christian sense. Indeed, even private philanthropy is not her idea of a model system for the necessary redistribution from winners to losers. Isabel's first lover, a pointedly crude, callous, and selfish man, nevertheless "really does a lot of good" in his position as overseer of county welfare programs: more good, it is implied, than can ever be done by trivial acts of self-sacrifice. "Governments gave money and did not ask for love. Money was beautiful . . . you could change lives without giving up your own life." Government is a "dealer in charity without the weights of love."

In her exposé of Christian charity, Mary Gordon thus inadvertently gives us a sudden compact insight into the much vaunted "compassion" of the Left. We may be seeing here just what is impelling so many Catholics to equate their religion with the welfare state: not so much compassion as guilt, and the desire to enjoy life's banquet disencumbered of Lazarus at the gate.

One reason *Final Payments* needs to be examined in detail is that it fixes the pattern of which Miss Gordon's later novels are progressive variants. *The Company of Women*, set partly in the pre-Vatican II period, draws the same sort of (loaded) dichotomy between universal and particular love. A group of unattached women, living separately, are linked by the guidance of a powerful conservative priest, Father Cyprian, who has in one way or another helped them, given meaning to their lives, and made them into "something." This little company places all its hopes for the future on a girl named Felicitas (after "the one virgin martyr whose name contained some hope for ordinary human happiness"), the daughter of one of their widowed members and the only child among them. But Felicitas gradually rejects the all-pervasive spirituality that Father Cyprian would impose upon her. She leaves her mother's Brooklyn apartment for Columbia University, briefly undertakes a radical style of life, gets herself pregnant, and returns to the group to have her baby. At this point the women build themselves houses near the now-retired Cyprian. Felicitas eventually agrees to marry (another man), and little by little begins "to have an ordinary life."

The novel makes conscious allusion to *Jane Eyre*, an allusion which Miss Gordon has underscored in interviews. Like Mr. Rochester, Cyprian must be symbolically castrated—Mary Gordon has warned us about her feminism—broken from his obsession with spirituality and made to accept his own need for human love. At the end of his life he is forced to admit that "the love of God, untouched by accident and preference and failure," still eludes him. As for the particular love of the women who surround him, this is the only real love he has felt—a fact he admits somewhat grudgingly: "They have dragged me down to the middling terrain of their conception of the world, half blood instinct, half the impulse of the womb." (Such ideas are among the elements that bring Miss Gordon closer to D.H. Lawrence than to the "female tradition" of Jane Austen and the Brontës she seems to believe she belongs to.) So much for putting your eggs in the basket of spirituality.

As for Felicitas, she continues the line, set by Isabel in *Final Payments*, of criticizing the ways of God to man: "I will not accept the blandishments of the religious life; I will not look to God for comfort, or for succor, or for sweetness. God will have to meet me on the high ground of reason, and there He's a poor contender." While the older women need a strict Catholicism to fill and order their otherwise diffuse and empty lives, Felicitas manages on what is revealed as a budding feminism. She turns away from sexual "liberation" when she sees how men exploit it for their own selfish pleasure. A graphic de-

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scription of a mangled abortion, as well as a section telling how Felicitas at first hates her baby and learns to sympathize with abusive mothers, constitutes part of this novel's contribution to feminist suasion. (In *Final Payments* it was a defense of lesbianism and a glorification of female friendship; in *Men and Angels*, it is an object lesson in how to combine family and career.)

But the feminism in *The Company of Women* goes far beyond the promotion of various items on the liberationist agenda to become the new moral imperative. The doomed, savagely devout priest is obviously meant in a way to stand for the old Church itself, which pointedly needs to be cut loose from male spiritual chauvinism—"macho clericalism," as Miss Gordon has put it—humanized, feminized, and brought down to earth by (the company of) women. If it seems at first surprising that Miss Gordon is no supporter of the post-Vatican II changes in the Church, and indeed mocks many of their manifestations—priests in chinos, sappy new rites of penance, daisy-covered prayer cards, etc.—this is because her real hope for renewal derives from the mystical and salvific feminism evident in *The Company of Women*. It is the female principle that will save Catholicism from the death of orthodoxy—although how the replacement of one expansive orthodoxy by a second, much narrower one constitutes an improvement, she does not say.

At any rate, traditional Catholicism having been effectively consigned to the ash heap of history in *The Company of Women*, in her latest novel, *Men and Angels*, the ideal of an ascendant religious sensibility is no longer embodied in a compelling man like Cyprian, but in a quintessential loser. Laura, a pathetic waif, bruisingly rejected by her family, seizes upon the idea of God's love to assuage the miserable loneliness of her existence. She becomes a mother's helper to Anne Foster, a Harvard Ph.D. in Art History and a winner who is not yet wholly secure about the fact. Anne has been happily making a home for her two children and her husband, a professor of French literature at a small northeastern college, when she is offered (at thirty-eight) a remarkable opportunity to prepare the catalogue for an exhibit of the works of Caroline Watson, an early 20th-century painter (a fictional composite of Cecilia Beaux, Mary Cassatt, and Suzanne Valadon), neglected in her own time but now being rediscovered thanks to the current interest in women. Taking the job requires that Anne stay home with her children while her husband goes off on a sabbatical to France.

Anne makes several attempts to be nice to Laura but really comes to despise her—for Laura, pathetic as she is, is also carefully presented as difficult and self-righteous. But Laura, falsely cheered by Anne's outward signs of affection, is so devastated when Anne fires her for negligence that she commits sui-

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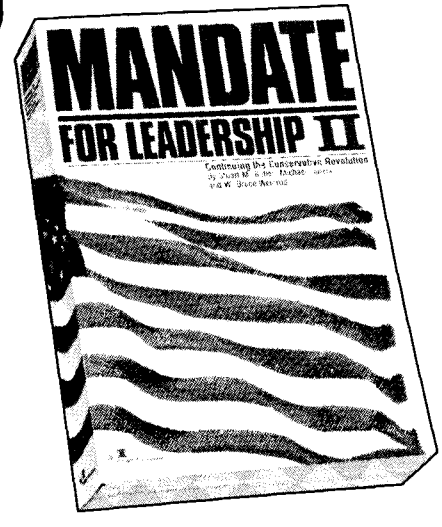
Ronald Reagan

on Mandate for Leadership I



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cide by slitting her wrists in the family bathtub. Later Anne, learning of Laura's unhappy life, mourns her inability to have overcome her hatred of the girl and extend the love that might have saved her. But everyone assures her that such love is virtually impossible (they must have read Mary Gordon's previous novels); no matter how much she suffered, Laura was inherently unlovable.

Anne, like Isabel before her, finally accepts the "monstrous" precariousness of human life—illustrated in various ways throughout the novel—without the consolations of transcendent love. As Laura may or may not be winging her way to the God who let her down, Anne walks bravely away from the gravesite into the beatitude of husband, children, home, and career.

> She wept and wept. People were so weak, and life would raise its whip and bring it down again and again on the bare tender flesh of the most vulnerable. Love was what they needed, and most often it was not there. It was abundant, love, but it could not be called. It was won by chance; it was a monstrous game of luck.

Although Anne is presented as having no "religious life," her tendency to self-scrutiny, her insecurity about her place in the world of achievement, and her fear that she might someday be punished for the "great good fortune" life has handed her put her fairly in the line of Miss Gordon's Catholic heroines. In this novel the fanatical and anti-sensual religiosity has been filtered off into Laura, while the sunny Protestant version of "religious life" is represented by Jane, Caroline Watson's beloved daughter-in-law, a beautiful, intelligent, and proud old woman who lives comfortably by the "senses" rather than by "morals."

Actually, it turns out that Jane, in an access of guilt over the way she had treated her husband before his miserable, untimely death, had once sought and found forgiveness in God. But her faith is of that highly qualified variety of which Miss Gordon approves: God's love (such as it is to begin with) will ever be "insufficient for the human heart," it "means nothing to the heart that is starved of human love." Thus the revisionist charity Miss Gordon advances as a gloss on the famous idealism from Paul that gives the book its title: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

In her novels Mary Gordon goes over the same ground again and again—the precariousness and random unfairness of human existence, its value nonetheless, the right to enjoy it if one is a winner, the nagging problem of what to do with the losers. Miss Gordon's work in some ways resembles those books and articles on "having it all" that are written for women, with their advice on cramming in as much as possible, keeping track of one's needs, making sure they're satisfied, the whole informed by a lurking fear that nothing will really suffice.

Thus in the end the real question is not whether human love will serve in the absence of the divine, for Miss Gordon's books are not really about love at all; they are about the monumental self-centeredness released by the collapse of orthodoxy, the agitated emptiness that finds an expression in movements like feminism. It is a historical irony, no doubt inevitable, that this same agitation should be the presiding difficulty of the contemporary Church as well, with its restless movements and demands and its cries over the "monstrous" unfairness of being poor, of being female, of being deprived. Where there was once some ability to accept the simple grace of God's love even in the face of inequalities, and to work in one's own quiet way for His kingdom, now this entire dimension seems to have been lost, or perhaps destroyed. Yet it is hard to see how all the aimless revisionism, of the variety produced by the Church itself or proposed to it by the likes of Mary Gordon, is going to lead the way back to salvation. For Miss Gordon's novels are at once the symptom and the artistic exemplification of the empty self-centeredness which happens to have become her subject.

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Charles Powers is assistant professor of sociology, Indiana University. He has published several articles on Pareto in *Sociological Theory* and *Contemporary Sociology*, among other journals.

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Of Arms & Men

THE PENTAGON AND THE ART OF WAR. By EDWARD N. LUTTWAK. *Simon & Schuster. 333 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by ANGELO CODEVILLA

EDWARD LUTTWAK shows what can happen to a great nation's military when its leaders cease to behave as if war were a real possibility. Prominent among the consequences is a system of higher command that corrupts the officer corps, and may be impervious to reform save by a catastrophic experience of military defeat. Luttwak's book is about how our military system turns abundant talent and money into a machine that performs poorly.

Luttwak does not explain why the Pentagon has ceased to believe in victory; his book is not meant to be an inquiry into ultimate causes. Rather, it is a description of the contemporary Pentagon's two most salient features: the glut of senior officers, which destroys morale while causing a thousand inefficiencies, and the lack of any authority over the four military services able to conceive strategy and to enforce priorities. The book also describes how these two features affect our armed forces' ability to do their job, and their cost. Finally it prescribes a reform: the creation of a general staff to remedy the services' collective incoherence. Luttwak believes this reform would naturally lead to other changes, including a reduction in the ratio of senior officers to troops, and therefore to radical increases in military effectiveness and efficiency.

In true Aristotelian fashion, Luttwak begins by immersing the reader in the particulars of our armed forces' most typical performance: Vietnam. Never in our history were so much blood, treasure, and dedication so utterly wasted. Each "community" within the armed forces sought the bureaucratic rewards that representation in Vietnam would bring. Each plied its craft unguided by any overarching plan that would give significance to the general effort. So, over the course of a decade, thousands of senior American officers lived in luxury in Vietnam, and spent their tours primarily protecting the interests of their parent communities in Washington. Command of operational units was changed as often as every six months for the avowed purpose of allowing as many officers as possible to "punch tickets" for higher jobs. In Luttwak's words: "So it was that *institutional* self-indulgence deprived the United States of any true chance of success."

Luttwak emphasizes that the military alone was responsible for our performance in Vietnam. Interference by civilians certainly did not improve matters, but it was not civilians who compelled the military to divide spheres of operations among the services with scant regard for results in the field, or to operate in ways that destroyed the troops' morale. Nor did civilians compel senior officers to put their careers above their duty to their men and to victory; no senior officer resigned over the conduct of the war.

After Vietnam, the services did not change their ways. The rescue mission in Iran and the invasion of Grenada, according to Luttwak, were planned and carried out by a combination of the services ill-suited to the task at hand. They were supervised by a chain of command that exercised control without responsibility. The flood of medals that followed these operations could not conceal their tragic flaws.

Luttwak argues that the services live in peacetime by the same procedures and priorities that have served so badly in war. They fight for the roles, missions, and budgets that produce generals' and admirals' billets. They also operate bureaucracies that appear to develop and procure weapons primarily to satisfy themselves. Yet ironically, though the Pentagon is bloated and inefficient, the United States does not have nearly enough military power—a recent set of tables developed by the Department of Defense and comparing U.S. and Soviet forces by category, from intercontinental missiles to tanks, shows the U.S. outnumbered by ratios that average five to one. The Department has claimed that these odds are compensated for by intangibles like superior leadership and organization, but it has singularly failed to substantiate this claim with concrete evidence.

WHY has the wealth of resources and talent at the Pentagon's disposal brought forth so little? In a chapter entitled "The Materialist Bias," Luttwak argues that the explanation is not to be found in "fraud, waste, and mismanagement"; these abuses add up to a very few percentage points in the budget. The problem is more serious. So long as one looks at military forces from any perspective other than the achievement of victory in war, one is certain to misunderstand them and to waste one's money. The source of our current troubles is that generations of senior civil and military officials have sought to "manage" the Pentagon according to criteria unrelated to war. It is this that accounts for the fact that the U.S. armed forces have too many chiefs, a surplus which has made the development of weapons far more expensive and time-consuming than need be.

The price of new weapons now includes much more than metal and microchips; it includes mandatory "inputs" from all of the "technical communities" in the Pentagon that want to justify their involvement in the project. The specifications for a weapon are thus driven by bureaucratic force to unnecessary complexity. The price in-

ANGELO CODEVILLA, *a new contributor, is legislative assistant to Senator Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming.*

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cludes the "stretch-outs," the "re-scoping," the mandatory design reviews and conferences, the armies of consultants, the airline tickets, the hotels, and the expense-account lunches that the system makes necessary. That is why the Army and the Air Force have gone without a new tank and bomber, respectively, for a generation. That is also why the new models will not be produced in numbers comparable to those of the Soviet tanks and bombers, or even of the older American weapons they replace.

Perhaps the main cause of all this, in Luttwak's reading, is the lack of any overall strategy. The reasons for this lack of strategy are many, but one is surely that no part of our military organization has been given the task of formulating strategy, or the authority to enforce it on the procurers of weapons and on the managers of men. Layers of command are superimposed on one another, producing multiple labyrinthine chains of command, none of which can issue in a set of men with the ability and the responsibility to prepare for war—much less to fight.

The problem of leadership which Luttwak describes analytically might also be described figuratively. Imagine an editor of a high-school newspaper walking into the Pentagon to interview the man in charge of winning the next war. If the editor were well connected, he might have an audience with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), this country's senior man in uniform, who heads the organization which nominally controls the Unified and Specified Commands, which in turn nominally control all our fighting forces. But the chairman would quickly point out that he does not actually control anyone. The joint staff he nominally heads is composed of Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine personnel, all of whom are promoted or demoted at the pleasure of their services.

The chairman would tell the young man to take his questions to the Unified and Specified Commanders. But they, in turn, would tell him that they have nothing to do with the development of weapons, tactics, or strategy. In fact, their job is to coordinate the operations of the military services in the field, just as the JCS coordinates the services in Washington. The commanders would say, too, that the careers of their subordinates do not depend on them, but on the individual military service. A war, they would say, would be fought by Army troops under Army command, Navy units under Navy command, and so forth. Their job would be to coordinate.

Convinced that the substance of American military power lies in the services, the editor would next ask the service chiefs about their responsibility for planning to win the next war. That is the job of the JCS, they would reply. By now, the editor might be able to retort: "But the JCS is just a meeting place for the four of you. Everyone I've met is a coordinator. Is *anybody* responsible?" The answer would come quickly: in our system of civilian supremacy the Secretary of Defense is responsible, and, of course, the President.

The Secretary of Defense would smile indulgently at the editor's question. Certainly he is responsible for winning the next war, he might say, but it is a purely formal responsibility. The office of the Secretary of Defense assists the services with research, development, procurement, logistics, legal services, and policy guidance. But it would not dream of planning or executing operations. That is the job of the JCS and the services.

In short, although many in the Pentagon are assigned the job of wielding power over what is bought, and over the bureaucracy, none is given the responsibility for achieving military results. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the Pentagon's main business, day in and day out, is nothing but the budget process—a complex series of bargains among the various communities that make up the services, and their allies in the White House and Congress, over who gets how much. Although the budget's annual presentation to Congress is accompanied by dire warnings and slick brochures about Soviet military power, no one involved in the process is under the illusion that

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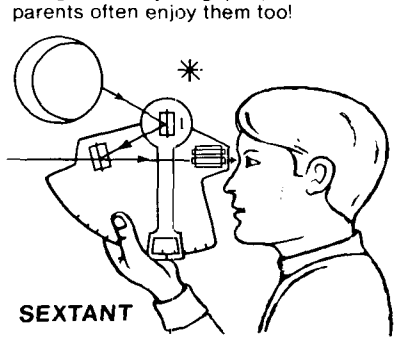

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talk of "the threat" is anything other than ceremonial; the battle is fought on the basis of sheer bureaucratic horsepower.

Hence the need for reform. Luttwak's proposal, though the details are complicated, is at heart simple: make some body of men responsible for fighting and winning wars, and place all higher headquarters, in the field and in Washington, under their command. In brief, a General Staff. Is this a good idea?

One wonders how far the effects of such a reform would carry. Surely even the present, inherently inefficient system would work much better than it does if a President, or a Secretary of Defense, chose to focus the attention of the men in charge on their jobs. After all, the present organization of the Pentagon does not *force* senior officers to behave as they do. It is simply one incentive among many. The Pentagon has worked under the current JCS system since 1947, but was not always so mindless of war as it is today. Development and procurement of new weapons was not always so slow, and "managementitis" was not always so virulent a disease.

The present state of things grew up along with changes in our military culture vigorously promoted by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara (1961-1968). Like Machiavelli's Prince, McNamara broke old careers—and career paths—and made new ones. Activities and attitudes that before 1961 had been tickets to oblivion became the hallmarks of personal success. McNamara brought hundreds of people into the defense establishment, many of whom have made it what it is today. What McNamara did has not been undone, and will not be undone until a person arrives in that post possessed of as much vision and willfulness as was he.

The trouble with Luttwak's book, which masterfully describes a whole series of moral, political, and organizational problems, is that it proposes a one-dimensional solution that does not do justice to the complexity of the analysis. Take the Pentagon's questionable ability to meet this country's need for protection against Soviet ballistic missiles. For a variety of reasons—doctrinal, political, and organizational—we allowed the Soviet Union to build up a lead in accurate, "silo-killing" missiles that is now beyond our ability to erase. Indeed, the military does not propose any plan to erase it. Any attempt to do so would be very costly, and would upset long-term agreements among the services for sharing the defense budget; it is thus beyond the limits of practical discussion. We have but one way open to us to overcome this intolerable predicament: build defensive systems that will decrease the value of Soviet missiles.

UNFORTUNATELY, as even the most casual observer of the Pentagon can see, our military establishment is not only opposed to taking money and emphasis out of current programs for the sake of strategic defense. It is actually incapable of building *anything* new, quickly, on a large scale. Luttwak shows convincingly that even small, relatively uncomplicated research-and-development ventures are turned into long-term, high-tech, expensive endeavors. It is thus not surprising that the Pentagon has inflated the technical requirements for anti-missile weapons. Although any missile ever built or designed could be destroyed by *currently* available lasers, the Pentagon has stipulated that we should not consider producing any anti-missile laser until it can burn through missiles at least 1,000 times as "hard" as current missiles. Such lasers may or may not be available in the next generation; by that time, the Pentagon may well have invented a new "requirement" even less likely to be met. In this way an inherently complex and costly project has been transformed into an impossibly complex and costly one.

It is difficult to see how the creation of a General Staff, by itself, would correct such propensities. Edward Luttwak's *The Pentagon and the Art of War* is an indispensable beginning to a full-scale debate over what ails our military establishment and what can be done about it; one only hopes that it will lead to that urgently desired thing itself.

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Resistance

THE JEWS OF HOPE. By MARTIN GILBERT. *Viking: Elizabeth Sifton Books. 237 pp. $15.95.*

Reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

TRY as they might, Soviet authorities have been notably unsuccessful in their efforts to crush the movement for Jewish emigration and the associated struggle for Jewish religious and cultural rights. The refuseniks—those Jews who officially have been denied permission to emigrate to Israel—have been subjected to just about every device in the totalitarian arsenal short of mass terror: economic reprisal, discrimination against their children, isolation from friends and relatives living abroad, constant surveillance, arrests, frame-ups, terms in the Gulag, and an anti-Semitic propaganda campaign of singular repulsiveness. They have been condemned to live in a society whose leaders openly despise them and whose ordinary citizens are exhorted to regard them as pariahs and traitors. For the refuseniks, moreover, the rule of law is nonexistent. That a refusenik observes Soviet legal standards with scrupulous care counts for nothing if the regime should decide that the time has come for him to be singled out for punishment. A reason, any reason, no matter how ludicrous it might appear to the outside world, will be found to justify the inevitable prison sentence, as witness the recent prosecutions of refuseniks on patently fabricated narcotics and firearms charges.

Yet despite having been consigned, semi-officially, to the status of enemies of the state, the refuseniks continue to press their case, nourished by the solidarity of friends and family, a powerful sense of Jewish identity, and, most importantly, the hope that they will eventually realize their long-sought goal—the right to live as Jews in Israel. In the meantime, the refuseniks have created, against daunting odds, an alternate culture, with classes in the Hebrew language and Jewish history and religious ceremonies conducted free from state control. It is their unwillingness to restrict religious observance to the narrow limits permitted by the state which the Kremlin finds especially infuriating; in response, the authorities have launched a remorseless offensive against the teaching of Hebrew which has culminated in a recent wave of arrests and jailings.

Martin Gilbert, the distinguished British historian best known for his ongoing biography of Winston Churchill, interviewed a number of the more prominent refuseniks during a trip to the Soviet Union in 1983: this book is an account, essentially journalistic, of their plight. *The Jews of Hope* is not, however, the definitive study of Soviet Jewry, and unfortunately it also lacks the kind of rigorous analysis one expects from a writer of Gilbert's credentials. Such central questions as the motives behind the Soviet Union's policies toward Jews, and the conduct of the state-sanctioned Jewish religious leaders, are only briefly, and indirectly, addressed. Yet in spite of its several omissions, *The Jews of Hope* is a revealing, and often moving, examination of anti-totalitarian resistance. The refuseniks come across as thoroughly admirable, even heroic, human beings; their oppressors, the constellation of policemen, prosecutors, interrogators, emigration bureaucrats, and propagandists are the anonymous functionaries of a despicable system.

Between 1968, when the Soviet Union first permitted a moderate level of Jewish emigration, and 1981, over 640,000 Jews took the initial step toward leaving the USSR. During that period some 260,000 were allowed to emigrate, leaving 380,000 compelled to remain in the Soviet Union. To this number must be added unknown thousands who would like to emigrate but who, out of fear that they might share the refuseniks' fate, have decided against applying for exit visas. Since 1979, when Jewish emigration reached its peak of 50,000, the number of Jews granted permission to leave has

ARCH PUDDINGTON, *executive director of the League for Industrial Democracy, is working on a book about contemporary totalitarianism.*

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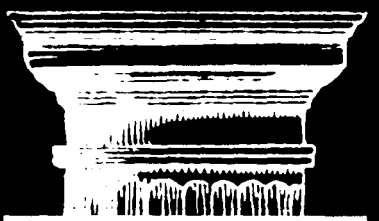

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fallen off dramatically; during 1984, fewer than 1,000 were permitted to leave.

Soviet officials have advanced various excuses as to why the gates of exit have closed. At the most absurd extreme, it is asserted (by a newly formed anti-Zionist committee) that no more Jews want to emigrate. On other occasions, Moscow has blamed the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which ties a nation's trade status with the United States to its emigration policies; this is clearly not true, since emigration reached unprecedented levels *after* the amendment was enacted.

Closer to the mark is the argument that Jewish emigration created unanticipated difficulties for the state, insofar as many more applications for exit visas were submitted than had been originally expected. That hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens were prepared to abandon the first nation of socialism for a country relentlessly portrayed by the official media as a principal outpost of world fascism was undoubtedly a severe blow to the Kremlin's pride. Still, while Jewish emigration dealt the Kremlin a propaganda setback, it has not significantly eroded the state's ability to control the Soviet population. This is at least partially due to the policy of official intimidation directed at the Jewish population, and particularly at those who attempt to leave. Jews have been let out, but a price has been exacted of sufficient severity to discourage other restive Soviet nationalities from raising the issue of emigration.

There are, to begin with, economic penalties. Jews who apply for exit visas automatically forfeit their jobs, and these are often quite good jobs as doctors, scientists, engineers, performing artists. In order to avoid prosecution under the Soviet Union's anti-parasite law, would-be emigrants are forced to accept the most menial and poorly paid occupations, such as night watchman or boiler operator.

The children of refuseniks are also punished. Again, the crucial lever is the state's monopoly over employment and educational opportunity. No matter how brilliant a refusenik's child may be, he will not be permitted to attend a university or practice a profession. The children are also the victims of public chastisement; the daughter of a prominent refusenik family was made to stand in front of her class while her teacher accused her of being an "agent of Zionism."

Refuseniks who have attained high military positions, including decorated war heroes, are demoted to the lowest possible rank, and hounded by the media. The regime attempts to keep contacts between refuseniks and foreigners to the bare minimum. Refuseniks consider themselves fortunate to receive one of every five letters or packages mailed from abroad; prayer books and Hebrew grammars are automatically confiscated. Their phones can be disconnected at the authorities' whim and their homes are periodically searched by KGB officials who invariably seize Hebrew books or religious materials.

Refuseniks must also contend with the complex and often changing bureaucratic regulations constructed by the regime as a form of legalistic persecution. Visa applications must be resubmitted every six months. Crucial among the required documents are letters from the applicant's various Soviet relatives giving assent to the proposed emigration. A refusal from a parent or other close relative can be used as justification for turning down the request. Moreover, a recent regulation requires that new letters of approval be submitted with each resubmission of the visa request. This is no small matter in a society where, for entirely justifiable reasons, the relatives of refuseniks might feel that even indirect participation in the emigration process could imperil their own or their children's futures.

Clearly, the regime's objective is to make the refusenik's life in the Soviet Union as unpleasant as possible. In addition to its economic, educational, and bureaucratic dimensions, this strategy entails a systematic campaign to prevent "unauthorized" religious or cultural observances from taking place. The police maintain close scrutiny over refusenik families, and go to extraordinary lengths to discourage their coming together for the celebration of Jewish holidays or for the study of Judaism. Since it involves a ritual celebrated by children, the authorities take extra precautions to prevent the celebration of Purim. In 1981, in Leningrad, the police were unable to learn at whose home the Purim play was to take place. They therefore blocked off the homes of ten activist Jews. The following year, ten policemen were assigned to seal off the home of a refusenik family where a Purim play involving ten children was planned: one policeman per child.

The regime responds with equal aggressiveness against those involved in the network of unofficial Hebrew schools. There are almost no Hebrew courses taught in Soviet universities and specialized institutes, and enrollment in the few state-sanctioned classes is limited to Christian scholars and KGB officers who specialize in Jewish affairs. Jews are not allowed to attend.

The authorities have also taken pains to insure that synagogues function solely as houses of worship, and not as centers of spiritual and cultural life. There are no religious schools and no rabbinical seminaries in the Soviet Union, and Jewish religious literature is practically nonexistent. In Leningrad the officials went so far as to forbid the synagogues from lending books to young believers.

IN RECENT YEARS the regime has also launched an anti-Semitic propaganda drive of a ferocity unparalleled in the post-Stalin period. In its milder form, this entails outright denial that anti-Semitism was the motivation behind the pogroms of the Czarist era; Jews, it is said, were victimized because of understandable peasant resentment over Jewish economic domination. In its more virulent strain, the new anti-Semitism involves charges like the one published in a Kiev newspaper in 1983 that "several dozen SS officers, pupils of the Hitler youth, taught in Israeli paramilitary schools and prepared specialists in conducting punitive expeditions" during the war in Lebanon. The author of this bit of fiction went on to add: "The Zionist six-pointed Star of David has replaced the

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spiderlike swastika. Zionism is the new fascism."

Lev Korneyev, a popular Soviet writer, said in the publication of the Communist youth organization that the purpose of Zionism was "to turn every Jew, no matter where he lives, . . . into a traitor to the country where he was born." Korneyev and other writers routinely accuse Zionists of complicity in the Holocaust by paving the way for Hitler's seizure of power. Explains Korneyev: "It is known that the extermination of hundreds of thousands of Jews is one of the main arguments for Zionism, which the Zionists—supporters of the Nazis—cynically exploit for their own ends."

Apart from the Arab nations of the Middle East, the Soviet Union is virtually the only country where the vilest sort of anti-Semitism is promoted at the government level, a point well worth remembering when one next encounters the argument that the Soviet system is much like any other and deserves the legitimacy for which its rulers yearn.

Indeed, in its treatment of the refuseniks, Moscow exhibits the worst features of the two forces which have shaped the modern Soviet state: the xenophobic anti-Semitism of Old Russia and the efficient, calculated cruelty of Communism. That Soviet Jewry has endured in the face of this fearsome combination is one of the most remarkable stories of faith and human courage of our time.

The Critic as Moralist

LITERARY CRITICISM. FRENCH WRITERS. OTHER EUROPEAN WRITERS. THE PREFACES TO THE NEW YORK EDITION. By HENRY JAMES. Edited by LEON EDEL and MARK WILSON. *Library of America. 1408 pp. $27.50.*

Reviewed by KENNETH S. LYNN

AT THE close of his nation's Civil War, the twenty-two-year-old Henry James entered upon the "delicate task," as he would later describe it, of mediating between the French writer and the American reader, of interpreting a foreign culture to his own through literary criticism. Of the hundred separate efforts he made in this connection, the bulk appeared as book reviews in the 1870's when he needed the income that journalism could bring him, although it is also true that one of his most remarkable performances, "The Lesson of Balzac," was first delivered as an address to the Contemporary Club of Philadelphia in 1905, and that his final word on George Sand did not appear until 1914, two years before his death. Ninety-seven of these pieces have now been brought together for the first time in the huge first section—running to 890 pages—a Library of America volume edited by Leon Edel, with the assistance of his University of Hawaii colleague, Mark Wilson. Five pieces on Turgenev, five others on other European writers, and the eighteen prefaces James wrote in his sixties for the New York Edition of his novels and stories fill an additional 430 pages of text.

We can say of James as a critic of French literature what he himself said of Sainte-Beuve, that there was something feminine in his tact, his penetration, his subtlety and pliability, his rapidity of transition, his magical divination, his sympathies and antipathies, his marvelous art of insinuation, of expressing himself by fine touches and of adding touch to touch, and that there was something masculine in his solid sense, constant reason, moderation, copious knowledge, passion for exactitude, and appreciation of general considerations. The richly ambiguous "international" light in which his novels of the 1870's and early 80's were bathed lent another kind of double-sidedness to his critical performances. Thus, when James in late 1875 rented rooms for a year in the rue de Luxembourg (now the rue Cambon) in Paris, the principal literary project he undertook was

KENNETH S. LYNN, *who teaches history at Johns Hopkins, is the author of* The Dream of Success *and* Visions of America. *He is currently at work on a life of Ernest Hemingway.*

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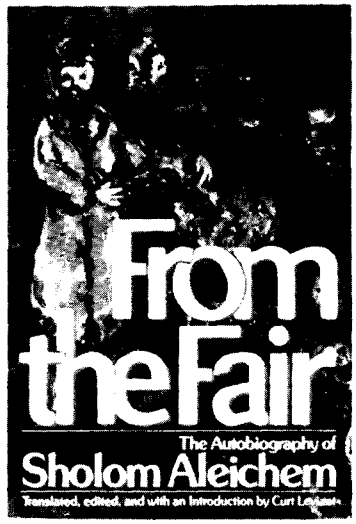

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a novel, wherein a delightfully innocent, warily fresh American, Christopher Newman, becomes involved with a great French family, whose behavior is marked, as James later described it in his New York Edition preface to *The American*, by "the arrogance and cruelty . . . of which great people have historically been capable." Some of James's days in his rue de Luxembourg rooms, however, were also given over to writing a piece for *Galaxy*, a popular American magazine, on the novelists of the recently collapsed Second Empire, in which conflicted feelings of admiration for the French and profound reservations about them were again in evidence.

"If all that is needful to make us like a certain order of things is to see it vividly and picturesquely portrayed," James wrote, "we should long since have been won over to an aesthetic *tendresse* for the empire. The empire has had its novelists by the dozen; emulation, competition, and the extraordinary favor which this branch of literature has come to enjoy, have rendered them incomparably skillful and audacious." For entertainment of a high flavor, he told his American readers, we need only choose at hazard among a "formidable host" that included Octave Feuillet, Ernest Feydeau, Edmond About, Gustave Droz, Erckmann-Chatrian, the younger Dumas, the Swiss-born Victor Cherbuliez, and the brothers Goncourt. The most powerful of all these talented writers, though, as well as the most representative of the realistic, descriptive school deriving from Balzac, was Flaubert. *Madame Bovary*, said James, was a "masterpiece"; in its pages, realism had said "its last word."

But he began to register his disapproval of Flaubert and company by cautiously observing that while "others" will continue to think of *Madame Bovary* as a great performance, to "many people" it "will always be a hard book to read and an impossible one to enjoy. They will complain of the abuse of description, of the want of spontaneity, of the hideousness of the subject, of the dryness, and coldness, and cynicism of the tone." But not until he turned to the case of the brothers Goncourt did James really speak his mind. While some writers are intensely French, he said, the *MM.* de Goncourt are essentially Parisian. "Their culture, their imagination, their inspiration, are all Parisian; a culture sensibly limited, but very exquisite of its kind; an imagination in the highest degree ingenious and, as the French say, *raffiné*—fed upon many dishes." As novelists, the brothers had decided that they could manifest themselves most completely in work of the most consummately modern type and had consequently gone into realism, of a particularly disagreeable kind. "There is something ineffably odd," James acidly observed, "in seeing these elegant erudites bring their highly complex and artificial method to bear upon the crudities and maladies of life, and pick out choice morsels of available misery upon their gold pen-points."

One of their books was *Soeur Philomène*, the story of a sister of charity in a hospital who falls in love with one of the house surgeons. Unfortunately, the surgeon is soon called on to perform an operation upon a woman of the town whom he has once loved and who has been stabbed by a subsequent lover. When the operation proves fatal to the patient, the surgeon drowns his remorse in absinthe and becomes an incurable drunkard. Finally, in self-loathing, he deliberately infects himself, during a dissection, with some poisonous matter, and dies in horrible tortures. As a piece of writing and visual observation, *Soeur Philomène* was masterful, in James's opinion. Nevertheless, the novel was the work of dilettantes. The *MM.* de Goncourt were *raffinés* who wrote for *raffinés*. "But they are worth our attention," said the temporary resident of the rue de Luxembourg in a paragraph that was full of feeling,

> because they are highly characteristic of contemporary French culture. They are even more characteristic than some stronger writers; for they are not men of genius; they are the product of the atmosphere that surrounds them; their great talent is in great part the result of sympathy, and contact, and emulation. They represent the analysis of sensation raised to its highest power, and that is apparently the most original thing that the younger French imaginative literature has achieved. But from them as from Gustave Flaubert the attentive reader receives an indefinable impression of perverted ingenuity and wasted power. The sense of the picturesque has somehow killed the spiritual sense; the moral side of the work is dry and thin. I can hardly explain it, but such a book as *Soeur Philomène*, with all its perfection of manner, gives me an impression of something I can find no other name for than cruelty.

An achievement in art or in letters always grew more interesting, the historically conscious James believed, as soon as we perceived its connections to something outside itself; indeed, as a reviewer he was eventually persuaded that the study of connections was *the* function of intelligent criticism. (From the New Critics of the 1950's to the deconstructionists of today, professors of literature who don't believe in setting texts in contexts have always loved teaching James, but it is hard to imagine that he himself would have much cared for their kind of attention.) The several volumes of the "remarkable genius who wears in literature the name of Pierri Loti," which James examined in a *Fortnightly Review* piece in 1888, offered him a good opportunity to state his beliefs explicitly. It was a comparatively unrewarding exercise for the critic, said James, to judge even books as independent of a school or fashion as *Le Mariage de Loti*, *Mon Frère Yves*, and *Pêcheur d'Islande* all by themselves. Each, to be sure, was an interesting illustration of the author's talent and character. "But they become still more interesting," James averred, "as we note their coincidences and relations with other works, for then they begin to illustrate other talents and other characters." As the plot thickened in the critic's mind, as the spectacle expanded, the genius of an individual stood revealed as the "living manifestation . . . of a na-

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tion or of a conspicuous group."

Along with Alphonse Daudet, Guy de Maupassant, and the brothers Goncourt, Loti had carried into the whole business of looking, seeing, hearing, smelling, into all kinds of tactile sensibility, and into analyzing and expressing the results of these acts, a seriousness much greater than that found among any other people. Contemporary literature, James sweepingly declared, contained nothing more beautiful than Loti's evocations in *Mon Frère Yves* and *Pêcheur d'Islande* of his windswept and wave-washed Britanny, and his exotic stories of southeast Asia were equally replete with vivid pictures of steamy riverbanks, squalid, fetid crowds and shabby, contorted pagodas, with precious little objects glimmering in the shade of their open fronts. But Loti had spoken best of all, in James's opinion, of "the one thing in the world that, after the human race, has the most intensity and variety of life," namely, the ocean. With extraordinary felicity, he had conveyed a sense of the awesome power with which all people connected to the sea were forced to contend.

THERE was an "irresistible illusion" of outward life in Loti. Nevertheless, he and the other novelists who now dominated the literary scene in France had paid so little heed to the deeper, stranger, subtler world of inward life, to the wonderful adventures of the soul, that it could almost be said of them that they had not pictured it at all. If these writers deserved "chastisement for their collective sin against proportion (since sin it shall be held)," James said, his powerfully judgmental choice of words making him sound very American, he did not know "how a more terrible one could have been invented," for the humiliating fact was that whenever they laid hands upon the spirit of man they simply ceased to seem expert. Once again, James came back to the example of Flaubert. There was such a difference between his superiority as a painter of aspects and sensation, and his lapses and limitations, his general insignificance, as a painter of ideas and moral states! "If you feel the talent that abides in his style very much (and some people feel it immensely as a sort of binding glory), you are bribed in a measure to overlook the inequality; but there comes a moment when the bribe, large as it is, is ineffectual. His imagination is so fine that we take some time to become conscious that almost none of it is moral or even human."

Himself the product of a Bible-reading culture which believed that making moral judgments was the responsibility of every individual, James was never able to exorcise his doubts about a culture which left the reading of Holy Scripture and the formation of moral judgments to a priesthood. Deference to morality, be it false or true, was "an essential perfume" in literature, he cried. For all his so-called cynicism we find it in Thackeray, James insisted, and we find it, "potently," in George Eliot and Turgenev. George Sand, however, was the only French novelist on his list of writers who was "haunted by a moral ideal."

The prevailing amorality of the French novel was especially distressing to him when it came to assessing Balzac. For "the most fundamental and general sign of the novel," in James's estimation, was that it was "everywhere an effort at *representation*." Measured by that standard, the author of the *Comédie Humaine* stood signally apart; unquestionably, he was "the first and foremost member of his craft." And yet, "he had no natural sense of morality." The "southern slope of the mind, as we may call it, was very barren in Balzac."

Somehow to get around this obstacle in the path of his appreciation was a task of the first importance to James, and he did so by arguing that Balzac "sanctifies his defects" by his merits. Balzac's unsurpassed grasp of worldly questions, that is to say, enabled James to forgive him for his lack of concern for moral questions, and thus to feel free to surrender to his fas-

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cination with the *Comédie Humaine* and his utter awe of the energy it had taken to produce it. "This huge, distributed, divided and sub-divided picture of the life of France in [the author's] time," James exclaimed in one of the flights of imagery which make all five of his essays on Balzac unforgettable, this "picture bristling with imagination and information, with fancies and facts and figures, a world of special and general insight, a rank tropical forest of detail and specification, but with the strong breath of genius forever circulating through it and shaking the treetops to a mighty murmur, got itself hung before us in the space of twenty years."

How had Balzac managed to do it? How could any man possibly have accumulated so much experience on which to draw if he was always fencing himself in against experience in order to preserve himself for converting it into history? "Out of what mines, by what innumerable tortuous channels, in what endless winding procession of laden chariots and tugging teams and marching elephants, did the immense consignments for his work reach him?" These questions about Balzac fairly mesmerized James, and when he said that he approached them through "the low portal of envy" he pointed to their bearings on his own career.

As HIS prefaces to the New York Edition amply prove, James worked enormously hard at the art of fiction. In a prodigious outpouring of novels and stories, he rendered shades of meaning and feeling with unprecedented delicacy. Nevertheless, he was not speaking insincerely when he said in "The Lesson of Balzac" that "the series of dusky passages in which, with a more or less childlike ingenuity, we [writers] can romp to and fro" are "mainly short and dark," and that "we soon come to the end of them—dead walls, without resonance, in the presence of which the candle goes out and the game stops, and we have only to retrace our steps." Balzac's work, by contrast, was distinguished by "the extraordinary number and length of [its] radiating and ramifying corridors." Even though he had "finally lost himself" in them, they nevertheless constituted a veritable labyrinth.

Balzac, to be sure, had been historically blessed, James emphasized. He had lived during a half century—1799-1850—when social conditions had been marked by color and contrast, whereas "fatal fusions and uniformities" had been "inflicted" on later generations of writers. "The running together of all the differences of form and tone, the ruinous liquefying wash of the great industrial brush over the old conditions . . ., doubtless still have left the painter of manners much to do, but have ground him down to the sad fact that his ideals of differentiation, those inherent oppositions from type to type, in which drama most naturally resides, have well-nigh perished." The luck of his lifespan, however, could only partially account for Balzac's titanic achievement. The *Comédie Humaine* was finally tied to the level of intensity with which Balzac had lived—and which is recorded for us, said James, "on every page of his work."

As for his own achievement, James's prefaces to the New York Edition make plain his moral intentions at the same time that they show him hauntingly aware of how dependent for success those intentions were upon the intensity of his responses to the world around him. As he wrote in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, "There is, I think, no more nutritive or suggestive truth in this connection than that of the perfect dependence of the 'moral' sense of a work of art on the amount of felt life concerned in producing it."

Power & Policy

GRAVE NEW WORLD. By MICHAEL LEDEEN. *Oxford. 256 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by HENRIK BERING-JENSEN

"THE U.S. is short of breath. You can always wait them out." This comment was made by Syrian foreign minister Abdul-Halim Khaddam in February 1984, and it proved painfully prophetic. The Lebanon crisis offered one more example of muddled American policy aims and the half-hearted use of military power.

Of course, foreign-policy headaches are not an exclusive American preserve; lately the Soviets have had some distinct problems of their own. The campaign against the installation of Cruise and Pershing-2 missiles in Europe was crude even by Soviet standards, and the attempt to kill the Pope bore all the marks of panic. A sense of impatience and frustration suffuses Soviet actions, a feeling which has been heightened by the long-standing leadership problems.

This sense of superpower drift has encouraged smaller players on the world stage, such as Libya and Cuba, to take a more independent role, thereby increasing the risk that the great powers will be drawn into conflict by accident. And these are the underlying themes of *Grave New World* by Michael Ledeen, a senior fellow at Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies, an adviser to former Secretary of State Alexander Haig, and a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY. In this book Ledeen examines the historical and structural causes of the present superpower quandaries and goes on to suggest some possible areas of improvement for Western policy.

According to Ledeen, the Soviet Union is at the moment experiencing severe internal strain, the result of decades of economic mismanagement. As many Soviet economists realize, the only real answer lies in decentralization and new incentives. The trouble here is that this will invariably weaken the power of the ruling elite; the fate of Nikita Khrushchev was an object lesson to Soviet leaders in the risks involved in modernization. With domestic reform severely constrained, Soviet leaders have naturally looked to foreign policy to justify their rule. As the late Leonid Brezhnev put it: "Foreign policy is our most important domestic problem." Unfortunately for the rest of the world, foreign policy is the one area in which the Soviet

HENRIK BERING-JENSEN's *review of* The Tsar's Lieutenant *by Thomas Butson appeared in our April issue.*

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Union as a centralized state enjoys certain advantages.

But an important new factor has entered Soviet deliberations: time. Confident of eventual triumph, the Soviet leadership has traditionally acted as if time were of minor consequence. If objectives were not achieved in the first round, there would always be a second. Discredited as the Soviet model has become around the world, this may no longer be the case. Moreover, the Soviets now have the Reagan rearmament program to contend with. The awareness that long-term trends are running against them, writes Ledeen, might tempt the Soviets to try to translate their military advantages into quick political gains. He warns that the standard and somewhat comforting image of the Soviet leadership as a group of conservative and extremely cautious operators may now be less accurate than ever. A new generation in particular, such as is represented by Mikhail Gorbachev, may feel the need to flaunt Soviet power on the international scene.

A sensible Western counter-strategy would naturally seek to limit access to Western technology and credits, thereby forcing the Soviets to effect internal changes and to drain away funds from the military. Under such a strategy the West would also continue a steady military build-up and engage in a more active campaign to enable Third World guerrilla movements to fight Soviet/Cuban oppression—that is, give the Russians a dose of their own medicine. But if these measures seem logical, the test lies in the ability to implement them. Ledeen spends the bulk of his book discussing the circumstances that make it difficult for the United States to respond effectively to the Soviet challenge.

Historically, the U.S. has enjoyed the advantage of a fortunate geographical position, protected by two oceans. Whereas most other nations have had to rely on military power and political cunning for their survival, the U.S. has been able to entertain the illusion that foreign policy was a matter of morals and good intentions. Even in the nuclear age these notions have persisted. Americans have continued to treat foreign policy as a rather episodic and unconnected affair, and their active efforts have most often assumed the character of fire-fighting.

These natural isolationist tendencies were reinforced by the Vietnam experience, where they took on a new twist. Traditional isolationists had held that the U.S. was too good to get involved in the affairs of others; after Vietnam, many saw the United States as itself the cause of world problems, a rogue elephant that had to be restrained. The use of force to achieve diplomatic objectives came to be considered immoral. In the Carter administration, Ledeen notes, an alliance was struck among naive moralists, holier-than-thou types (personified by the President), and the New Left, with disastrous results for American interests in the world.

THE handling of the Iranian crisis offers a classic case study in the interaction between abstract moralism and historical ignorance. Finding the Shah's rule distasteful and (thanks to cuts in the CIA) not knowing much about the rival forces, the Carter administration hesitated when the regime came under attack. Instead of expressing immediate support for the Shah, as urged by National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, the State Department engaged in a desperate search for people of the proper democratic stripe; for a while it even dabbled with thoughts of creating a constitutional monarchy in the British or Swedish (!) style. Brzezinski's later recommendation, that the army be given the go-ahead for a takeover to restore law and order and then cautiously be encouraged to make improvements, was equally ignored. When Carter finally decided to follow Brzezinski's advice, it was too late: the army leadership had disintegrated, executions had begun on a scale surpassing anything Iran had experienced under the Shah, and the West had lost

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one of its most important allies in the region.

The Iranian crisis teaches us the futility of searching for some magic middle in a civil war where, by definition, the moderate Center has ceased to exist. By refusing to choose between unpleasant alternatives, by only going for the ideal, Ledeen warns, one may end up losing even the merely tolerable. The national interest occasionally dictates that the U.S. work together with repressive rulers. But the crucial point is that it is possible to influence the behavior of Western-oriented, authoritarian regimes—Ledeen singles out the recent history of Spain as an example of the kind of evolutionary change the U.S. should seek to encourage—while no such opportunities exist once a country has fallen prey to chaos and Communism.

As Ledeen shrewdly concludes, a foreign policy based primarily on abstract moral principles is often pursued at the cost of those very principles. The cause of freedom is better served by pursuing more limited, sharply defined, and concrete goals.

BUT foreign-policy fiascos are not to be blamed on the politicians alone. Much of the responsibility rests with educational institutions, with the intellectuals, and especially with the media, three forces that help set the national agenda and thereby decide what is important and what is not.

Ledeen takes note of studies showing the unrepresentative nature of the media elite—81 percent of the nation's leading journalists voted for George McGovern in 1972—and shows that they have an instinctively critical if not hostile attitude toward American policies and purposes. As examples of press failure Ledeen cites the conspiracy of silence among Western correspondents stationed in China during the Cultural Revolution and the reports of Pulitzer Prize winner Seymour Hersh that the South Vietnamese inmates in Hanoi's "reeducation camps" rather enjoyed their lot, this at a time when thousands of boat people were perishing at sea.

Most striking is the way the U.S. media covered the plot to kill the Pope in 1981. Although by normal journalistic criteria this should have been the story of the year, the media first stubbornly denied, then downplayed the implications of Soviet involvement in the plot. As late as 1983 the Washington *Post* dismissed allegations of KGB involvement, while Flora Lewis of the New York *Times*, acknowledging the facts, warned her readers not to become too exercised over them lest St. Peter's Square become a new Sarajevo. Typical was the *Times* editorial exonerating former KGB chief Yuri Andropov of personal involvement by suggesting that "his people became mired in a sleazy conspiracy on imagined authority, a likelihood Americans should be the first to understand." Here the customary American self-lashing is combined with a rather touching ignorance of how the Soviets operate: as Ledeen rightly notes, authorization for a deed of this magnitude would have to have come from the Politburo, which meant Brezhnev, Andropov, *et al.*

As Ledeen sums it up, the effect of media suppression is to deprive the public of a necessary debate over foreign policy and to leave Americans with a totally distorted view of the evils of the world. If foreign policy is to improve, media responsibilities will have to be clarified. In addition, Ledeen proposes a number of concrete practical steps to be taken by government, such as greater accountability in the bureaucracy and a greater reliance on the common pool of expertise available in the West. As part of the general education effort, he recommends that the President use the "bully pulpit" of his office to explain his policies fully, frankly, and consistently, and that this be done in an extended campaign rather than as one-shot media events.

ABOVE all, in Ledeen's view, a major effort should be made to restore bipartisanship to foreign policy. American national interests remain the same no matter who happens to be at the helm, yet as experience in Vietnam and now in Central America shows, partisan division between Congress and the President gives enemies of the United States a chance to win in Washington what they could not achieve on the battlefield. Ledeen does not challenge the legitimacy of congressional oversight of foreign policy; what he objects to is the attempt to exercise day-to-day control over the conduct of international affairs. The constant policy reviews and the threats to cut off aid only invite violence, and put off even further the prospect of fulfilling any agreed-upon goal. Besides, only the naive can believe that fully-fledged democracies can emerge overnight.

Finally, as Ledeen reminds us, without firm and consistent policies the West will deprive itself of the possibility of influencing or forestalling events. Forced merely to react, we will only be able to improvise from day to day, blundering from one crisis to the next. Such a fate can be averted; but unless we take the necessary steps, it will become the fate we deserve.

Camp David, Cont'd.

THE BLOOD OF ABRAHAM. By JIMMY CARTER. *Houghton Mifflin. 257 pp. $15.95.*

Reviewed by DANIEL PIPES

SINCE leaving the Presidency, Jimmy Carter has devoted much of his time to the Arab-Israeli conflict. His well-publicized activities have included participation at Anwar Sadat's funeral, traveling through the Middle East in early 1983, and presiding over an international conference in Atlanta later in 1983. He has also been engaged in less public endeavors; this reviewer, for example, attended a long day's meeting in New York devoted to the Middle East which Mr. Carter sat through with great patience.

The source of Mr. Carter's continued interest in the Arab-Israeli conflict is not hard to find: to some extent his personal faith plays a part, but principally it is the fact

DANIEL PIPES *is associate professor at the Naval War College, and the author of* In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power.

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that as President his only major achievement lay in helping Egypt and Israel make peace. For wholly understandable reasons, he does not wish to relinquish the glory of that achievement. Then, too, the Middle East—the Carter administration's strongest suit and the Reagan administration's weakest—offers a unique avenue to score some points against his successor. Perhaps even more important, the Arab-Israeli conflict presents the ex-President with his best opportunity to regain a voice in public affairs.

In light of these purposes, how does Mr. Carter fare in *The Blood of Abraham*? He attempts two tasks: to explain the Arab-Israeli conflict and to propose the main lines of American policy in the Middle East.

First, as the book's lugubrious title implies, Mr. Carter understands the Arab-Israeli conflict primarily in terms of religious differences. He believes that today's problems derive from the distant past: "To understand the roots of the hatred and bloodshed that still shape the relationships among the people of the region, it is useful to go back to the holy scriptures of ancient times."

Unfortunately, Mr. Carter fails in his efforts to relate current Middle East politics to the Bible and the Koran. As with others who view current affairs through this prism, the former President confuses the very real and powerful force of religious feeling with the abstractions of religious doctrine. Ignoring changed circumstances, he all too readily sees 20th-century protagonists acting under the compulsion of inherited drives. He forgets, for instance, that the Bible knows no Muslims and the Koran knows no Zionists.

Thus, the argument that "continuing bloodshed" is "caused by the ancient rivalries between the Israelis and Arabs and among the Christians and Muslims" entirely misses the point. The first armed clash between Zionists and Arabs took place only in 1911; and today's fighting in Lebanon goes back to 1860. Both these conflicts derive from incompatible nationalist claims first espoused in the 19th century; they cannot be satisfactorily explained by "ancient rivalries."

Mr. Carter makes many other elementary mistakes in attempting to interpret the background of current problems. Revealingly, he more than once refers to "Arab, Jew, and Christian"—as though "Arab" were a religious category analogous to "Jewish" and "Christian," and as though most of the Christians of the Middle East did not speak Arabic. He writes that Golda Meir was "born in America" (it was actually Russia). He asserts that Israel tripled the land under its control in 1967 at the expense of "Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinians, and Syria." The Palestinians? Which territories had they controlled? Mr. Carter describes Lebanon as "the most ravaged, the most shattered, country on the face of the globe," as though vastly more destruction has not been wrought in Afghanistan and Cambodia. He writes about Lebanon that except for the Syrians and Israelis, "all other foreign troops were out of the country" by January 1985—ignoring the presence of Iranians in the Bekaa Valley, the French in Beirut, and the many nationalities represented in UNIFIL in the south.

In addition to these and other errors, many passages are inconsistent. For example, we read that "Begin had come to Camp David intending to work out a statement of general principles for a peace agreement, then to leave to subordinates the task of resolving the more difficult issues." A few lines further down: "After detailed negotiations began, Begin spent the best part of his energy on the minute details of each proposal, the specific language of each sentence or phrase." Nowhere does Mr. Carter explain the apparent contradiction between these observations.

As HIS second goal, Mr. Carter hopes to influence U.S. policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. In

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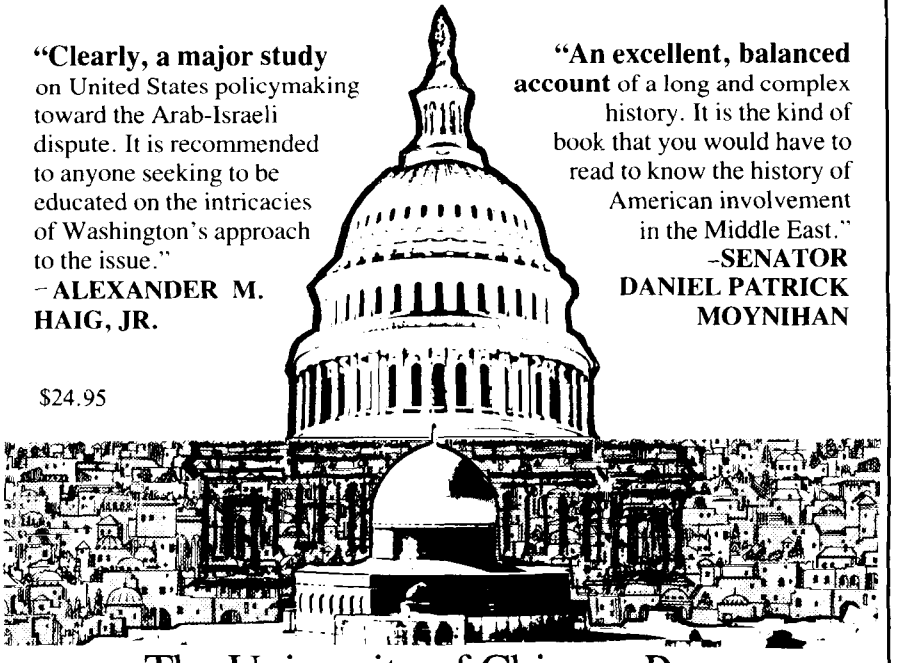

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his view, "the situation in the Middle East continues to be unstable because of two crucial factors. First, the Arabs refuse to give clear and official recognition to the right of Israel to exist in peace within clearly defined and secure borders. Second, the Israelis refuse to withdraw from the occupied territories and to grant the Palestinians their basic human rights, including self-determination." Characteristically, this analysis is worded so as not to place greater blame on either side. As anyone who followed American politics in the late 1970's might guess, Mr. Carter's proposed solution lies in asking the two sides to halve their difference: "The Arabs must recognize the reality that is Israel, just as the Israelis must acknowledge Palestinian claims."

How to achieve this? The former President sees the two sides as hopelessly paralyzed and therefore unable to act. Arguing that the "antagonists cannot be expected to take the initiative," he places the burden of bringing them together on the United States. "The U.S. Secretary of State [must] explore the options [of an international forum] unofficially among the disputing powers to ascertain as broad a base of potential agreement as possible. On this can be initiated semi-official and then official peace talks." In other words, the sponsor of the October 1977 U.S.-Soviet communiqué and the Camp David summit is calling on his successor to do exactly as he did.

Not surprisingly, Mr. Carter expresses great displeasure that the Camp David accords are not working out as he planned. But, characteristically, he cannot make up his mind whom to blame. On several occasions he holds Israel responsible: "The commitments made at Camp David concerning the occupied territories and rights of the Palestinians have not been honored." Also, he argues that a May 1981 statement in which Prime Minister Begin promised never to leave the West Bank or Gaza "contravenes the basic terms of the Camp David accords." But he also states that "the terms of the treaty have been observed by both sides." Which is it? The vacillating qualities that marked Mr. Carter's career as a politician remain entirely with him as a writer.

Despite his many drawbacks as an analyst of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Mr. Carter does occasionally provide sharp insights. With reference to Syria, for instance, he has the perspicacity to foresee that the radical fundamentalist Shiites of southern Lebanon, though receiving support from Damascus, pose a long-range danger to the regime of Hafez al-Assad. He also understands that Syrian forces expelled Arafat from Lebanon in December 1983 so that Assad would be in a position to dominate the PLO. Few other Western politicians have so clearly grasped this purpose.

For every such insight of value, however, Mr. Carter provides many that are ill-judged. Although recognizing Hafez al-Assad as the ambitious tyrant he is, Mr. Carter inexplicably believes that he could "be a prime catalyst in achieving an overall peace agreement in the Middle East." True to form, Mr. Carter is unable to condemn even the bloodthirsty ruler of Damascus.

In sum, *The Blood of Abraham* is a thoroughly amateurish venture. As a former President, Mr. Carter suffers from a special disability in his efforts to write on current affairs. Anything he writes will get printed—a nearly irresistible invitation to self-indulgence. This book contains nothing of note; only the author's former eminence guaranteed that it would find a publisher.

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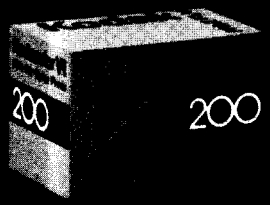

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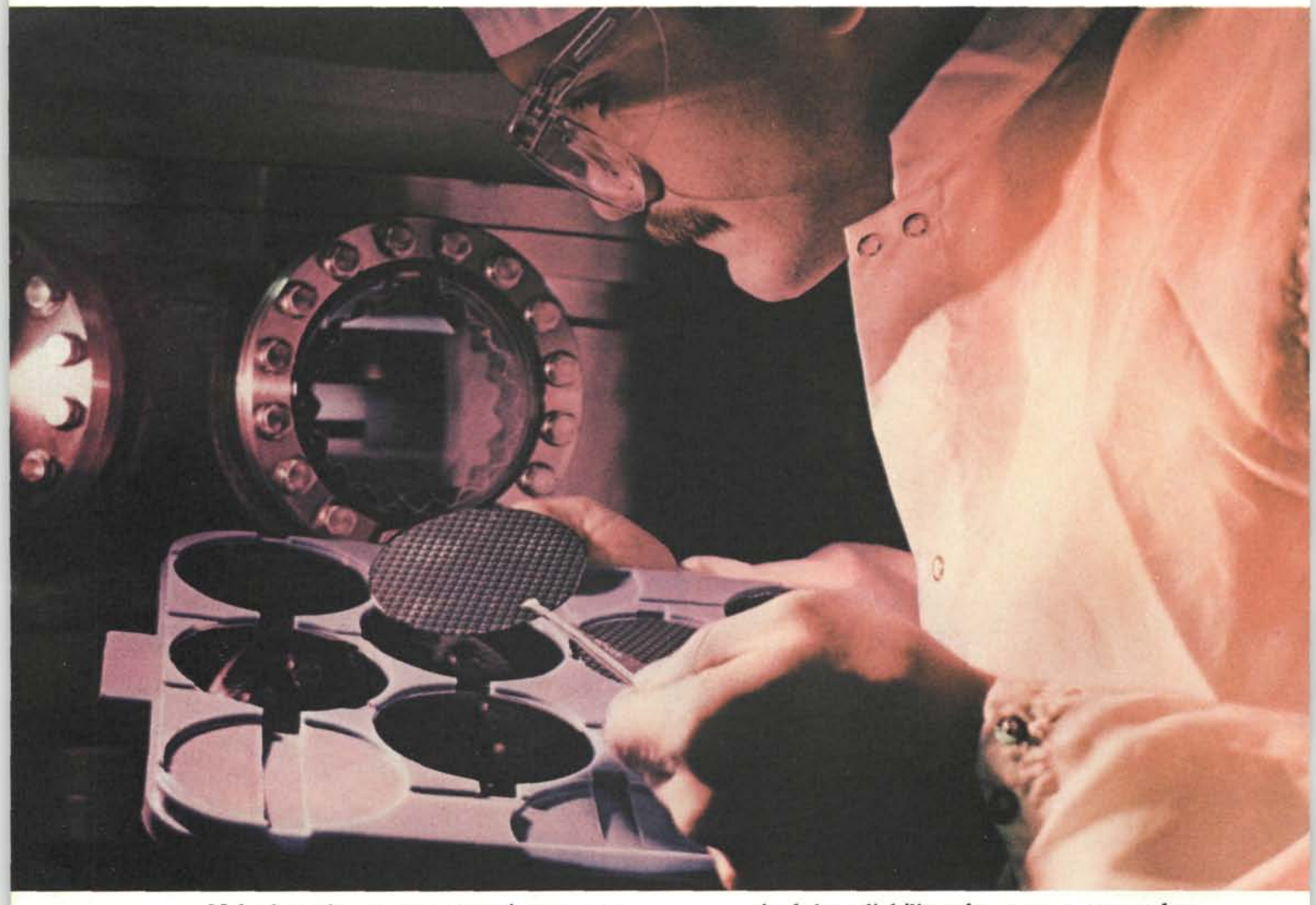

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